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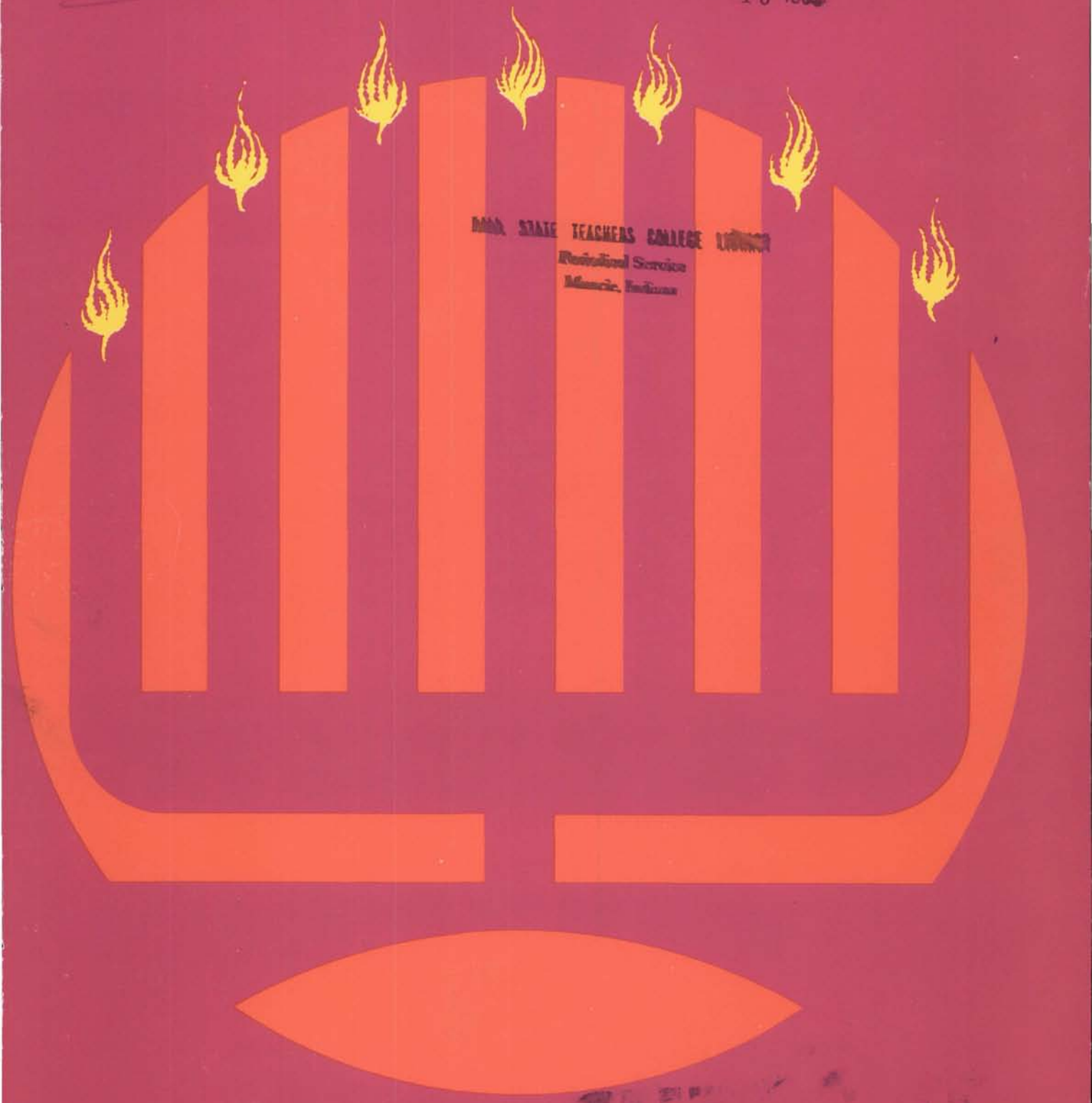

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RAMPARTS

THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN'S JOURNAL

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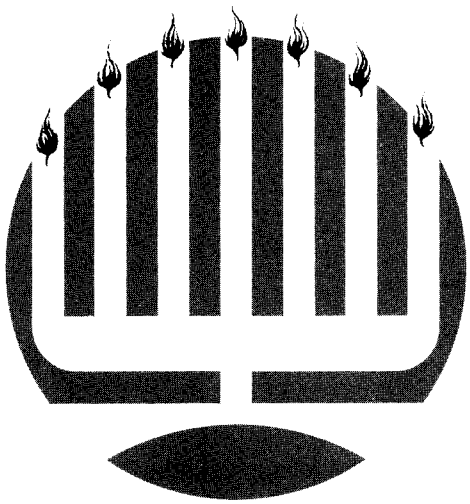

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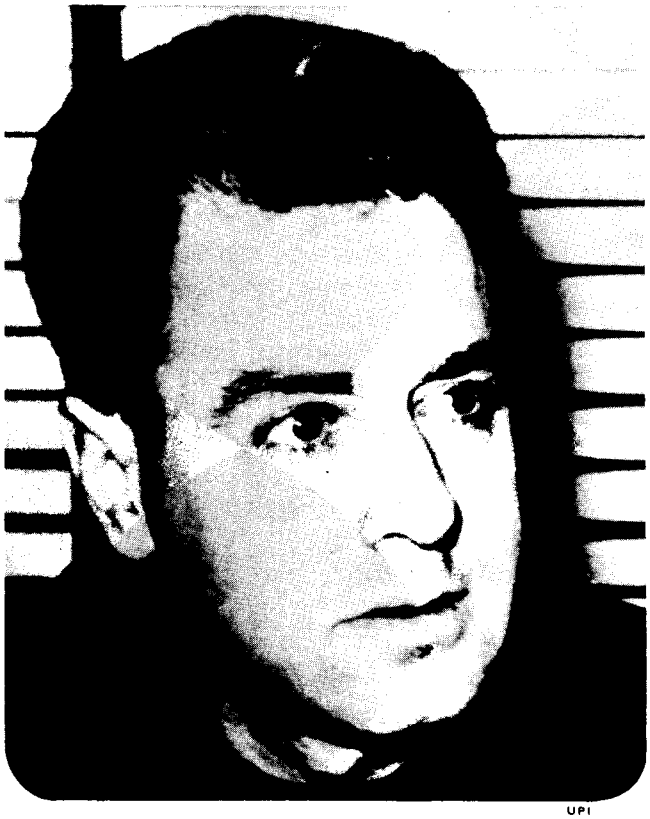

KARL SHAPIRO *was born in Baltimore in 1913 and was educated at the University of Virginia ("To hurt the Negro and avoid the Jew/Is the curriculum"). When his first book,* Person, Place and Thing, *was published in 1942, Shapiro was with the army in the South Pacific, where he remained until the spring of 1945. His second book,* V-Letter And Other Poems, *was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1945; in that year appeared his controversial* Essay on Rime, *an Audenesque poetic examination of modern literature.* Trial of a Poet *(1947) contained some of his most polished poems, together with a confused study of Ezra Pound's treason trial; this title poem was dropped by Shapiro and has never been reprinted. His poems were collected in* Poems 1940-1953 *and* Poems of a Jew *(1958). Shapiro's major work was greatly influenced by Eliot and Auden, but in a recent collection of essays,* In Defense of Ignorance *(1960), he delivered a frontal assault upon these masters. The Eliot attack, issued first in the philistine* Saturday Review, *quickly became notorious, and Shapiro has continued the attack upon Eliot in other magazines, including* Prairie Schooner *(which he edits). Shapiro has proclaimed his new allegiances to Whitman, Lawrence, Henry Miller and the late William Carlos Williams; he is presently working on new poems in the manner of Whitman: loose, unbuttoned, emotional, and directly counter to such a carefully-textured poem as THE SYNAGOGUE.*

Karl Shapiro is the leading American Jewish poet. The first American Jewish poets to win high critical praise, however, were Kenneth Fearing (whose reputation later faded) and Delmore Schwartz, whose In Dreams Begin Responsibilities *(1938) is still regarded as a landmark in American poetry. The inimitable mocking irony of Schwartz was beautifully crystallized in a handful of lyrics written before he was twenty-five; Schwartz has, unfortunately, not been able to extend his idiom, and his later, more discursive, poetry is disappointing; his last very good poems were written circa 1943:* Starlight Like Intuition Pierced The Twelve *(his masterpiece) and a wonderfully mocking poem on Lincoln beginning, "Manic-depressive Lincoln, national hero!"*

Many critics continue to regard Schwartz and Shapiro as the only significant American Jewish poets. However, since 1950, several others have won considerable fame. The oldest of these is Stanley Kunitz (born 1905), whose collected poems received the Pulitzer Prize and the Bollingen Award in 1959. Kunitz had been known to other poets for many years (he had been "one of the masters," as Robert Lowell said) and had been associated with the Yvor Winters group. Kunitz is very definitely a "University poet": polished, intellectual, "metaphysical." Some of the newer Jewish poets who have been associated with universities, are Anthony Hecht (born 1923) and Leonard Nathan (born 1924).

A more adventurous young Jewish poet is Frederick Seidel, whose Final Solutions *(1963) contains poems deliberately calculated to shock; Seidel's idiom owes something to the Lowell of* Life Studies: *it has life but little of Lowell's studied art. But the wildest, most notorious, of the American Jewish poets is Allen Ginsberg. What Shapiro has called "Allen Ginsberg's innocuous little poem* Howl" *was seized by Customs Inspectors in San Francisco in 1957 and became the focus of an "obscenity" trial.* Howl, *cleared of "obscenity" charges, circulated freely, and people rushed to read the little paperback. In* Howl *and in the later* Kaddish, *Ginsberg tried to be a kind of Jewish Whitman. However, the survival-value of Ginsberg's work is slight, and he seems already to be joining the now-faded Kenneth Fearing and the egregious Ben Maddow, whose tricks he echoed.*

There remain three masters: Stanley Kunitz, Delmore Schwartz, Karl Shapiro. The most powerful of these is Karl Shapiro.

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Karl Shapiro

THE SYNAGOGUE

THE SYNAGOGUE dispirits the deep street,
Shadows the face of the pedestrian,
It is the adumbration of the Wall,
The stone survival that laments itself,
Our old entelechy of stubborn God,
Our calendar that marks a separate race.

The swift cathedral palpitates the blood,
The soul moves upward like a wing to meet
The pinnacles of saints. There flocks of thanks
In nooks of holy tracery arrive
And rested take their message in mid-air
Sphere after sphere into the papal heaven.

The altar of the Hebrews is a house,
No relic but a place, Sinai itself,
Not holy ground but factual holiness
Wherein the living god is resident.
Our scrolls are volumes of the thundered law
Sabbath by sabbath wound by hand to read.

He knows Al-Eloah to whom the Arab
Barefooted falls on sands, on table roofs,
In latticed alleys underneath the egg
On wide mosaics, when the crier shrills.
O profitable curse, most sacred rug,
Your book is blindness and your sword is rust.

And Judenhetze is the course of time;
We were rebellious, all but Abraham,
And skulked like Jonah, angry at the gourd.
Our days are captives in the minds of kings,
We stand in tens disjointed on the world
Grieving the ribbon of a coast we hated.

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Some choose the ethics of belief beyond
Even particular election. Some
In bland memorial churches modify
The architecture of the state, and heaven
Disfranchised watches, caput mortuum,
The human substance eating, voting, smiling.

The Jew has no bedecked magnificat
But sits in stricken ashes after death,
Refusing grace; his grave is flowerless,
He gutters in the tallow of his name.
At Rome the multiplying tapers sing
Life endless in the history of art.

And Zion womanless refuses grace
To the first woman as to Magdalene,
But half-remembers Judith or Rahab,
The shrewd good heart of Esther honors still,
And weeps for almost sacred Ruth, but doubts
Either full harlotry or the faultless birth.

Our wine is wine, our bread is harvest bread
That feeds the body and is not the body.
Our blessing is to wine but not the blood
Nor to sangreal the sacred dish. We bless
The whiteness of the dish and bless the water
And are not anthropaphagous to him.

The immanent son then came as one of us
And stood against the ark. We have no prophets,
Our scholars are afraid. There have been friars,
Great healers, poets. The stars were terrible.
At the Sadduccee court he touched our panic;
We were betrayed to sacrifice this man.

We live by virtue of philosophy,
Past love, and have our devious reward.
For faith he gave us land and took the land,
Thinking us exiles of all humankind.
Our name is yet the identity of God
That storms the falling altar of the world.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HOWARD GRIFFIN

MAXWELL GEISMAR, *one of the leading contemporary literary critics, is best known for his studies of modern American novelists:* Writers In Crisis *(1943);* The Last of the Provincials *(1947);* Rebels and Ancestors *(1953); and* American Moderns *(1957). His most recent book is a controversial attack on* Henry James and the Jacobites *(Houghton Mifflin). This is a complete analysis, book by book, of the novels, prefaces,* nouvelles, *and stories of Henry James, which reaches the conclusion that James was "self-enclosed, all-sufficient, isolated and ignorant about the true basis of life and experience"; the "New Criticism" and the James cult are brought directly into the line of Mr. Geismar's fire. The James study is an integral part of Mr. Geismar's new program of "revaluation" of classic American fiction. Mr. Geismar, who lives in Harrison, New York, is an Associate Editor of* RAMPARTS.

Maxwell Geismar

THE JEWISH HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION

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I HAVE JUST BEEN READING Norman Fruchter's *Coat Upon a Stick*, a novel of Jewish life that takes place in a different orbit utterly from such familiar novels, say, as Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?*, or Jerome Weidman's *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*. The Fruchter novel is about a lonely, sick, poor, stubborn and proud old man who is the *shamos* at an East Side New York synagogue composed mainly of other old men like himself. What we get here is a beautiful picture of the last remnants of the old-fashioned Orthodox Jewish religion of the immigrant culture in the New World. It is very different also from the new-type Orthodox, Reformed or Conservative synagogues—or social centers—built by the sons or grandsons of these immigrants, along with their huge shopping centers, in the prosperous Long Island or Westchester suburbs of New York, such as the one I live in.

These are two disparate worlds, two cultures, and their juxtaposition makes you realize more acutely the psychocultural dilemma, or plight, or perhaps even trauma, of such contemporary and "assimilated" Jewish-American writers as Saul Bellow, or Bernard Malamud, or Philip Roth—not to mention the half-Jewish (part Jewish, non Jewish?) mystic Zen-Buddy, J. D. Salinger. Thinking about Mr. Fruchter's painful, compassionate and wryly-humorous chronicle, I was reminded of another novel of authentic Jewish-immigrant life in the tenements and on the pavements of New York's East Side: the classic *Call It Sleep* by Henry Roth, in 1935. In a sense these two novels, Roth's and Fruchter's, mark the beginning and the end of the strictly European, or Old World, Jewish culture in the United States; a period, roughly, of about seventy-five years. Along the way, there have been a score of interesting studies and novels which have described various aspects of this religio-cultural cycle. I am thinking of such books as Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*, or Harold Frederic's *The New Exodus*, or Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*, or Meyer Levin's *The Old Bunch*, and Mike Gold's *Jews Without Money*, among many other books of the same order.

But the cycle has ended. The contemporary "Jewish problem" for the American novelist of our own period is something altogether different. In part it has been, in the work of Bellow or Malamud especially, an attempt to *regain* these lost roots, or to reconstruct the true values of their disappearing heritage of Jewish culture. For most of the contemporary Jewish-American writers are more at home in comfortable Park Avenue or West Side New York apartments, or in the even more prosperous and status-conscious suburbs, New Jersey, Long Island, Westchester, of Herman Wouk's novels and Philip Roth's short stories. In part the "Jewish problem" for such contemporary writers as these is simply whether there is any Jewish problem at all. Or how to accommodate the disappearing values of Jewish culture to the contemporary American scene. Or whether, after the appalling barbarism of the Nazi regime—a crime against civilization in which every other so-called Christian nation of the western world was in large or small degree an accessory—they should become again, as it were, "self-made Jews." And finally, as a problem which exists even in Israel itself—*which* Jewish heritage should they hold in their hearts and embody in their literary work?

II.

FOR IN RETROSPECT, the contribution of the Orthodox Jewish religious heritage to American culture was both limited and formal. Just as in *Coat Upon a Stick*, the New York East Side synagogue was designed to preserve the sense of the old-world community; it was surrounded by all the ancient rituals and taboos against the outside and *goyim* American scene. I am not saying that these traditional values of Orthodox Judaism were not fruitful in themselves. To the contrary, as in *Call It Sleep*, the first contact between the immigrant children of the old-world culture and the "power-super-power" of the early 20th century urban American city resulted only too often in a "sidewalk and gutter" generation of "new Americans"—tough guys, and wise guys, greenhorns turned smart-alecks all too fast and too hard, "regular fellas" who embraced everything new with alacrity and who were often ashamed and uneasy about everything old, enduring and valuable in their own heritage. "Hey, geng!" says

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the little hero of Henry Roth's chronicle, and on a popular TV program recently, I heard the moderator—a distinguished Princeton professor—chant "Hi, folks" with much the same intonation.

Nor are the sons and grandsons of this Orthodox Jewish tradition any better or any worse than the generally comfortable and well-to-do middle-class American social stratum into which they have assimilated so fast and so well. That is probably what I hold against them, that they are indeed so typically, so impeccably "American"; since in my secret heart and perhaps culturally chauvinistic spirit I consider the Jewish heritage as, if not "superior" to at least different from the ordinary norms of humanity; and I impose upon these poor, suffering successful business men of my own Westchester County a moral obligation to be something better than what their society demands of them. Well, they are better in a few respects, perhaps. They tend still to be more liberal, humane and compassionate than most of their financial counterparts; they haven't forgotten all of their heritage of suffering; they are more sensitive to the threat of oppression for any group of people. They still have a lingering, if often formal, respect for learning, culture and books; and I still remember the leading member of one of these typically conventional Orthodox Jewish suburban congregations who in our living room declared he was "a bit of a bibliomaniac himself." To which I was tempted to answer that I was "a bit of a rabbi, too."

For these are the solid American middle-class citizens whom Herman Wouk satirized so brilliantly in *Marjorie Morningstar*—and then advised, as an eminently solid citizen himself, to settle down in Westchester and accept, without question and without reason, the conventional mores of their society. He hardly had to tell them this, which they had done already; and as a gifted talent, springing from the same tradition of revolt and dissent as myself, he had perhaps the traditional Jewish moral obligation to tell them something else. For the Jewish prophets of antiquity were never satisfied with things as they were; that was why they were prophets. It is no coincidence, in my mind, that Mr. Wouk has returned to the Orthodox Jewish faith, even while, as one of our best-selling novelists, he represents the prevailing climate of American opinion, good or bad.

MEANWHILE, the best and liveliest contributions to the American culture of the early twentieth century came indeed, not from this traditional Jewish religious faith—but from its own dissenters, outcasts and rebels. The flowering of Jewish culture on the New York East Side from 1900 to 1915, say—and which to a certain degree was centered around that great Yiddish Art Theatre which the visiting Henry James could make nothing of—was comprised mainly of bohemians, radicals, reformers, anarchists, and rebels of all sorts who poured the ancient Jewish heritage of social justice into New-World forms. As early as the 1890's, William Dean Howells, moving from Boston to New York, had found this "alien mixture" both intoxicating and invigorating: it formed part of his own radical and reformist Christian Socialism. A little later, Lincoln Steffens, also fascinated by this East Side cultural ferment (which was Russian and European in spirit, and perhaps dominated by a Tolstoyan mood), was on the edge of "becoming Jewish." Bakunin, Marx, Proudhon, Dostoievsky, Nietzsche, Sorel, Balzac: these were among the other European thinkers whom the burgeoning East Side culture brought into the stream of American thought; and conversely brought a provincial American culture back into the main stream of Western European thought. Such other typically American figures as Hutchins Hapgood (and a little later, Theodore Dreiser) haunted this "New World Ghetto," so full of spiritual excitement, where Emma Goldman had met Alexander Berkman among all the other memorable events; where Jacob Epstein lived in a Hester Street garrett, and where Jacob Riis showed the New York City Police Commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt, something about tenement life.

And these are the two poles—the orthodox religion, the dissenting tradition of the Jewish moral fervor which was centered around social injustice—of the Jewish heritage in the New World. This divided heritage, in turn, lies behind the work of some of the most talented Jewish-American writers of the contemporary period. Of some;

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but not all. For some were still ignorant or ashamed of their origins, like so many other "modern Americans" who were moving "up" in a society that seemed at times to be so completely fluid as to have no true base at all, no permanency, no validity—nothing but movement or flight. And others, like the gifted Hannah Arendt, in her recent book on Eichmann and "The Banality of Evil"—as though evil, and in particular the Nazi evil, could ever be banal!—had become so "sophisticated" as to imply that the European Jews had welcomed and willingly assisted in their own destruction; and that Adolf Eichmann himself was only an unconscious cog in a kind of new scientific-industrial machine for the "conversion" of human beings into gold, soap and lamp-shades.

On a deeper level of thought and feelings, our own brilliant young psycho-historian Jack Jones, author of a remarkable monograph, *To the End of Thought*, and of a forthcoming book on the cultural patterns of contemporary life, has pointed out how the monotheistic Hebrew culture was a decisive step in that process of inner repression which accompanies, or creates, the development of civilization. Freud himself was aware of this factor, which lies behind the "great hatred" of the pagan human spirit against the Jews as the symbol of psycho-biological repression; and which was most obvious in the twisted Nazi revulsion against both Judaism and Christianity, accompanied by all sorts of "pure," and that is to say, perverted bestialism.

III.

BUT HERE I MUST PAUSE to pay tribute to the late Van Wyck Brooks, grand historian of native letters, whose final volume in *Makers and Finders* contains such eloquent passages on the immigrant Jewish contribution to American literature and culture. Quite like Howells, and unlike the snobbish, fastidious and ignorant Henry James who saw only the threat of the "menacing alien presence" in New York's East Side during the 1900's, Brooks, a native American democrat in the old-fashioned tradition, welcomed and celebrated every new strain which heightened our literary sensibility and our moral force. I think his five-volume history of American literature is an epic work, in a period not marked by literary epics, on which all future historians will have to draw—and which *this* literary historian has already used, gratefully and affectionately, in some of the sections above.

Perhaps this is the place, too, to add that I consider myself an American literary critic of Jewish descent and heritage, rather than a "Jewish critic," whatever that may mean today. Sometimes indeed I wake up in the morning and ask myself, half in some kind of dream-nightmare state, What *is* a Jew? Isn't it some kind of imaginary and exotic label which civilization has imprinted on one part of the human race, just as it has fastened equally misleading and artificial tags on all the other sections of the family of man, in order for each section to feel either superior or inferior to, or at least different from, all the other sections which at base are so closely related in our common human origins and a common human destiny? But whatever the answer, so long as there are Jews left in the world, bearing their special heritage of suffering and yes, prescience, perhaps due to suffering, then I have no choice but to be one.

I mention this personal element, too, in order to clarify the particular bias of my own view in this article, and my own critical stance in evaluating the work of the other so-called "Jewish writers" in contemporary fiction. For the dilemma of their "Jewishness" is in part also my own, and I view their resolutions of this problem with a special interest—even while I am considering them also not as Jewish writers at all, but as part of a certain trend, or a certain tradition, in American literary history as a whole. I know this is likely to leave me cross-eyed at points, or afflicted by a peculiar kind of double vision spiritually, but on the whole I welcome this critical malaise for what it has brought to me as well as what it has done to me. For isn't it also, in its own particular mode, a part of the historical Jewish role of being both "within and without" a series of temporal and passing societies or cultures—of being the Lord's Witness before the follies, subterfuges and crimes of mankind?

Well, this is a large claim, I know, and one cannot always fulfil it, and very often it is a lonesome, if not altogether paranoid, social position,

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which you must also adopt with caution, with humility and, if possible, with the humor of the outcast as well as the complacency of the anointed. And I console myself further, in this predicament which I can only add that I did not seek, but that life has thrust upon me, by reflecting that *all* writers, or all good writers, or almost all the writers that I admire, are in the quite similar position of being at once participants in and observers of their own society, of being radical critics of the countries or cultures which contain their deepest roots—of also being the witnesses of the Lord, or of the civilizational process, even as to their own personal follies. And they too are the shifty protagonists as well as the lofty biographers of the tragi-comic ordeal of human existence.

But I have gone on longer than I intended, and perhaps more personally than I should, in tracing the background of our group of American (or American-Jewish) fiction writers today. In fact, as I now realize, I shall only have time for a few typical literary figures who illustrate the historical background which I've been sketching in—and in a certain sense, the background of this problem is more interesting perhaps than the individual attempts, to date, to resolve the dilemma of this contemporary group of American writers of the Jewish heritage.

IV.

Is it a cultural heritage, is it a religion, or is it an enigmatic blood-and-race affair? That is the unresolved question which haunts the so-called "Jewish mind," and I still remember the good (Low) Episcopalian minister of our town admonishing my wife, bold atheist that she claims to be, fierce pro-Jewish spirit that she is, and rather like the Jewish prophets of old sometimes having scant respect for her errant religious cohorts, that she could hardly be called a Jew if she did not attend synagogue. I remember the statement of the "declassed" chappie in the current English revue, "Beyond the Fringe," who denies that he is a Jew at all—since he is only "Jew-*ish*," a remark that does conform to the minister's dictum.

So first among the current group of American writers, I should perhaps mention Chicago's Nelson Algren, of half-Jewish origins, I believe, and who has never either affirmed or denied this fact, and yet whose new book, *Who Lost an American?* fits squarely into the prophetic tradition of both Jewish and American dissent. Loosely written as is this account of Algren's recent travels in the U.S.A. and in Europe, composed in a more or less hit-and-run fashion, it has absolutely brilliant descriptions and critiques in it of the "play-boy" contemporary American scene, of Chicago and New York literary affairs, and figures, of France and Spain. What perhaps confuses some readers—though it will not, I suspect, so much as it has confused the solemn, type-casting book-reviewers—is the mixture of wild and surrealist humor, of poetic and touching reveries, and of sometimes a quite savage and desperate social criticism whose only match today is in the symbolic realism of James Jones's last novel, *The Thin Red Line*. This book, I also happen to believe, is perhaps the best American novel of the last ten years. I will wager my critical reputation on this; and yet it was not even mentioned as a candidate for either the NBA book awards for 1963, or God forbid, the Pulitzer Prize awards.

But here I remember also the beautiful and penetrating study of "Pan-Africanism and Negritude" by the Negro sociologist St. Clair Drake, in the recent collection of Negro writing called *Soon, One Morning*. Drake's point is that Pan-Africanism, for the American Negro, is more of a myth than an anthropological fact; that its true values, like that of Zionism for the American Jews, are those which can establish a sense of dignity, pride, and true individualism—not to mention a greater sense of group power in the political arena—for American Negroes. So even, in a larger sense, beyond that of Zionism I mean, is the whole myth of "Jewishness"—not quite a culture, not always a religion, and certainly never a "race," since the Jews are always so completely intermingled and fused with all the many different cultures and societies and peoples with whom their ancestors have dwelt. And since Nelson Algren does not choose to embrace this myth, we must also, rather regretfully to my mind, now omit him from our list. For this is also a kind of "elected exaltation," or a kind of self-chosen mar-

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tyrdom, to be a Jewish-American writer in the strictly contemporary American scene, and I have no desire to inflict this distinction and this burden upon those who wish it not for themselves.

PERHAPS THE BEST and widest talent among the new writers of Jewish culture certainly now belongs to Philip Roth, who, to confuse matters a little more, is partly Jewish, partly American, and perhaps most definitively a *New Yorker* magazine product. I have called this group of writers, in my *American Moderns,* the "wise-child school," and perhaps Henry James was their true godfather. But what marks off Philip Roth precisely is that, like John Hersey before him (and the listing of any author in this article is not meant, as in Hersey's and Jones's case, *ipso facto* to throw doubt on their pure Aryan heritage), he is trying to escape and break through the rather formal, neat and pretty landscape, all with trim hedges and cultivated Jamesian gardens, of the typical *New Yorker* literary scene—with its controlled but always eventually polite and ambiguous forms of human anguish. (Well, perhaps, the recent fiery proclamation by James Baldwin was another exception to this; but of *that* article I could say more in a different article on Negro American writing.)

What marked Roth's first volume of short stories, *Goodbye, Columbus,* in 1959, was that they had really reached an adolescent, or even post-adolescent phase—but I hasten to qualify this perhaps unfair statement by adding that they were brilliant, sometimes moving, sometimes hilariously funny tales by a young writer of much ability and promise. They had a typical fusion too of genuine feeling and respect for the authentic older Jewish tradition—which is not really present in Herman Wouk's work; his older Bronx types are curiously unreal, when compared, say, with Clifford Odets's marvellous characters in the earlier plays—and a biting scorn and irony for the new generation of wealthy and assimilated suburban or "American" figures. This I must admit I admired; and it is close to my own position. I think on the whole the fathers and grandfathers of the Suburbanite enterprisers were better, simpler and richer people in any true moral sense; but this may be a matter of money more than biology, and of the acculteration process rather than of religious or cultural heritage—and the children of the Suburbanites may again revert, as it appears they are doing, to the cultural and scholarly pursuits of their ancestors. The son of one of our wealthy friends, for example, is planning to teach history in a university community where a mink coat on his wife's shoulders would be a sign of opprobrium rather than of social approval, as he told his father. "Of course I do not wholly approve of such principles," added the bewildered parent; but perhaps in his deepest level of feeling, he did.

To get back, however, Roth's novel, *Letting Go* (1962) was a distinct gain upon the short stories, in some of which one also felt and resented a *tour-de-force* quality that subordinated the real meaning of the material to a tricky climax. This novel was extremely good in many sections; there were beautiful scenes, episodes and chapters which in sheer virtuosity of craft and depth of feeling reminded me of William Styron's work. Beneath the novel's elegant surface, too, the ideo-content is the contrast of older Jewish life—both respectable and comfortable in the hero's case, and poor, dingy, mean in that of his friends'—and the "new freedom" of contemporary academic life. But a freedom that is qualified, of course, by the desire to "get ahead," to curry favor with the department heads, and not to stick your own neck out—and in the Jew's case, particularly in the "English" departments, knowing that all his own foibles are likely to be regarded as "racial traits."

Just as this also explains, perhaps, why so many Jewish critics have thrust themselves into the forefront of the Jamesian Bandwagon today, for nothing could assure their propriety, their respectability, their code of gentlemanly behavior better than this particular artist, who was at base so enigmatic and slippery, so de-classed and de-cultured, so snobbish and vulgar. (I am not really thinking of Leon Edel, who does, however, fit this case so perfectly.) It would take a bold Jew, indeed, to picket the Jacobite Procession; but there will be some of these too, as there always are. Meanwhile, reading Philip Roth's *Letting Go* with so much admiration, I kept wondering why

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all of its wonderful parts added up to so little in the end; why his characters, often described so well, float around, like little lost fragmented atoms in the atomic void where they have lost their proper fields of power. And reading Jim Jones's *The Thin Red Line* at almost the same moment, I suddenly saw, or thought I saw, the answer.

FOR THE WHOLE POINT of Jones's new novel—as another excellent American playwright of Jewish descent, Arthur Miller, had made me realize again in his notable preface to *A View From the Bridge*—was the public, or in this case the martial, *responsibility* of every protagonist. Every man in Jones's Company C for Charley knows that his behavior, or lack of behavior, in the Guadalcanal mop-up, will intimately affect every other man in the Company, to the point of life and death—so that they are no longer free agents in any sense, and that this group responsibility adds a whole new dimension to the most ignoble, selfish, or venal of their private acts or thoughts. That is the whole secret of Jones's novel, rare as it is in a contemporary fiction marked mainly by the intricate studies of detached, solitary, introspective and *un*responsible individuals; that, and the fact that this artist accomplishes his effect so well, without false moralism, patriotism, sentimentality, etc. The contrast of these two novels makes the people in Roth's book even more vapid, placeless, rootless, and valueless—they carry no human, social and finally no artistic weight at all.

"Letting Go," then means to this writer not the sudden, often triumphant emotional release of an inhibited or a socially-confined literary character, since there is nothing here to let go *from*. But isn't this precisely the plight of so many other young American writers of Jewish background, who can no longer rebel against their own Jewish heritage—as did the East Side Bohemians and Radicals of the early 20th century—and yet whose deeper moral sensibility will not quite allow them to identify, as do the Wouks in the Age of Woukism, with contemporary American society either? Just as in a larger sense it is the dilemma of *all* contemporary American writers who no longer have a valid radical cause to believe in, apparently, as did the Older Generation of Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson; and who since the Hemingway epoch have still felt themselves even more profoundly alienated, without cause and without reason—since apparently like Hemingway they do not wish to look for causes or reasons—from their own country and culture. (Except, that is, when they are even more falsely linked to the national destiny, like the ex-Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., by the exigencies of the Cold War, of political office, and of personal ambition—exigencies which apparently permit to all these aspiring if amateur politicos every license of false scholarship and political rhetoric.)

But I had meant here to discuss in detail the work of a still more popular *New Yorker* colleague of Philip Roth's, J. D. Salinger. It's another sign of the period, too, that this whole *New Yorker* school of writers has had so much attention, while such a fine historical fictionist as Truman Nelson of Salem, Massachusetts is virtually unknown. Nelson's two best novels to date, *The Sin of the Prophet* and *The Surveyor*, are remarkable works of the historical imagination in the re-creation of the Abolitionist period just before the Civil War; and this novelist himself conveys a kind of rare Old Testament morality of justice and wrath: an inheritance surely of the Hebraic mood—though I can't literally claim Truman Nelson for this survey of "Jewish writers" and only wish I could. And what about the remarkable Texas-Catholic novelist, my friend Howard Griffin, whose first two novels, *The Devil Rides Outside* and *Nuni*, are still virtually unknown to the larger American reading audience (and naturally to our "best" literary quarterlies today, whose job should be to promote just such figures), although Griffin's recent documentary, *Black Like Me*, has achieved wide popularity in this country and abroad. Nelson Algren, James Jones, William Styron, Truman Nelson and John Howard Griffin are all, to me, major and serious talents—while I have just seen at least five intense, solemn, analytical and academic texts based on the enigmatic, dubious and slight literary achievement of J. D. Salinger.

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BUT PERHAPS MY OWN ERROR in this case is that I have never taken Salinger seriously enough. He is really a rather charming, sophisticated, witty and often entertaining light-weight, who has achieved the difficult, almost impossible, feat of converting a personal neurosis into a weird kind of phobic art, in the later short stories, which apparently corresponds to a strain of national insanity. His work is a field-day, obviously, for oriental scholars in American literature—another dizzy sign of the times—who can trace him back without trouble to Emerson and Thoreau and Whitman, if they skip the difference in texture and density of the older writers. One of the most prominent of these new orientalists in our midst (and I am not being prejudiced, except on the side of common sense), Ihab Hassan, has recently declared that Seymour's suicide—around which Salinger himself is now hovering so compulsively—must have been "an act of love," of excess joy and pleasure in life—and here I must part company with these erudite analysts of the academic world to whom, as to Hassan apparently, everything American must therefore be good, and lovable.

I belong to what I believe to be an older, deeper and more rigorous American literary tradition than that of "Radical Innocence." I might call it the radical maturity of a Thoreau, an Emerson, a Melville, a Whitman, a Dreiser, who all indeed were familiar with Oriental philosophy which they were trying to convert to an American literary-social texture—rather than, as with Salinger, the other way around. I realize, too, I haven't mentioned at all the specifically Jewish element in Salinger's work. And I can only plead that he doesn't either, although he is often dealing with a semi-Jewish New York City bourgeois background, and with oddly assimilated characters like "Boo-Boo Tannenbaum." The notorious Glass family of the later chronicles—one of the weirdest literary dynasties in contemporary fiction—is not only theatrical, brittle and translucent, but obviously, and perhaps ignominiously, Jewish on the father's side. But since Salinger himself draws a charitable curtain around the father, just as, amidst his mystic pantheon of Eastern Atmans, Oms, Ghurus and Buddhas, there is no mention of Jehovah himself—who like his present disciple might cast a skeptical glance at all this elaborate, leisure-class nonsense when there is real work to be done in the world—I will leave the matter there.

To the credit of both Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud, they are more plainly and directly Jewish in their background and their work alike, and far less whimsical and tricky in their personal values than is Salinger. Both Bellow and Malamud belong to the *Partisan Review-Commentary-Dissent* axis of literary achievement rather than to the *New Yorker* school. That is to say, they are solid, serious and sound writers; though these magazines, which often set the tone for our other literary quarterlies, have usually, as I've suggested, stressed a second order of fictionalists, while ignoring the larger talents who don't quite fit their rather severe and prim categories. And then, in turn, these critical molders of the "best" literary opinion today may go quite overboard in an attempt to rectify what they obscurely feel to be their own inhibitions and narrow standards of "excellence." It is quite a sight to see Mrs. Lionel Trilling suddenly espouse Norman Mailer as *the* novelist of our period, when Mailer has written absolutely nothing of consequence, fictionally, since *The Naked and the Dead*, and has in fact written several cheap and bad novels. Just as I was astounded to see in *The New York Book Review*—the book review of this particular Establishment—the Columbia critic, F. W. Dupee, lauding James Baldwin in much the same terms.

BUT SINCE THESE COSMOPOLITAN CRITICS have all come from an extended sojourn in Henry James's embowered England, and are fresh to, and perhaps freshly ignorant of, the real twentieth-century American literary, historical and social scene, perhaps we will have to forgive them. (Though history, to paraphrase another prominent contemporary, will not absolve them.) Meanwhile there is nothing really *wrong* with the work of either Bellow or Malamud; it simply doesn't seem right enough to me—that is to say, of the first order of talent. And in Bellow's *The Victim*, just as in Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, the Jewish heritage, in this modern and

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sophisticated view, takes something of a beating. Here Bellow, like Arendt, almost comes to believe that if a portion of the human race has suffered and been punished and condemned *long enough*, it must somehow, somewhere, be partly their own fault. In certain fits of primitive pique, Jehovah himself vouchsafed this warning to the Hebrew tribes; and there may be an undertone of psychological truth to this dubious thesis, which I would prefer to ignore.

But Bellow's Judaism is altogether solemn, somber, painridden and joyless; it is perhaps closer to the Orthodox religious strain, as I remarked about it some years ago. It is intended as retribution for sinning souls and errant spirits; and when Bellow himself tried to achieve a brighter and wilder release of spirits (perhaps "pagan," perhaps Bohemian-Jewish) in *The Adventures of Augie March* or more lately *Henderson the Rain King*, the results were rather dubious. Malamud, by nature, is freer and funnier and less constrained; with more of that genuine humor—not irony, not wit so much—which lies in such authentic first-generation Jewish chronicles as *Call It Sleep* or *Coat Upon a Stick*. Malamud's *The Assistant* is an excellent short novel; *The Magic Barrel* has some fine stories in it. It is only in his most recent work, *A New Life*, which is again the familiar story of the assimilated Jew, the new American, faced by all the highly-civilized prejudices of the academic world, that Malamud's people, like Philip Roth's, seem to lose their identity, their real cultural individuality, and float and bump around aimlessly and meaninglessly in a kind of blind, dark, neo-Darwinian orbit of existence—of blind power, accident and chance, unredeemed by anything, by everything, that is human.

Isn't this the true contemporary American world, as rendered to us by our most sensitive new novelists today, Jewish or otherwise? And wasn't it the singular contribution of the earlier immigrant-Jewish artists, scholars and thinkers in the 1900's to attempt to humanize a New World which they had already felt to represent power-super-power at the expense of all the ancient graces and amenities of the human spirit itself? And isn't that just the residual trait which lies behind the best work of the assimilated Jewish-American writers today—even when their work reveals their own failure to achieve this mode of experience and feeling in the modern world—even perhaps when their work, as with Herman Wouk, displays a complete surrender to the material and martial values of contemporary civilization? Well, at least that is why, in my own case, born and bred as middle-class, as conventionally, as "assimilated" as the next one, and that is to say, also bearing the enigmatic "Jewish" heritage which marked me out for some reason obscure to me in our decent Westchester suburban town as also possessing a kind of nameless sense of shame without any corresponding sense of Jewish achievement, wisdom and virtue: that is why I have finally reached the kind of literary, social and human position which I have been trying to define in this essay.

I have slowly moved, that is, year by year—gradually seeing that life is prouder, bolder, wilder and funnier, both angrier and more tragic, than I had ever dreamed in my circumscribed youth—over to the side of all the dissenters, the "nay-sayers" who now appear to me to be saying yes to life far more emphatically than the yes-men. I belong with the rebels and non-conformists of all hues, the social protest groups of all sorts and skin-colors, pacifists or militants, freedom-riders, Catholic Workers on Chrystie Street, Women for Peace, Anti-Testers and Anti-Bombers. For that is where the side of life is in our present civilizational fix—a fix that is explosive—and that is what my own Jewish heritage, myth or fact, now means to me. And I am in the good company of most of the major American literary figures of the past, at least, who happened to be raised on the Old Testament, which is, I assume, our tribe's best book yet.

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THE JEWISH IDEA

THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE approaches to the story of "The Jewish Contribution to America." One may choose to present the record of the American Jews who distinguished themselves in the arts, in literature, in science, in statesmanship, and in industry and finance, or one can focus on that which is unique and distinctive in the Jewish heritage and background—the "Jewish Idea"—and then probe to what extent (if at all) the "Jewish Idea" has had an impact and, if so, whether it continues to shape the affirmations of this republic which are regarded as "self-evident" by all those whose pledge of allegiance is not mere lip-service but commitment of conviction.

Virtually all volumes on "The Jewish Contribution to Civilization," as well as the specialized studies in any of the many areas where persons of Jewish descent have done featly, follow the biographical method, i.e., they enumerate the Jewish Nobel Prize winners (a disproportionately large number) and the Jewish eminencies in their respective fields. They provide extended biographical dictionaries of persons of Jewish parentage who have won fame and acclaim. Those who pursue this type of specialized biography rarely examine *the Jewish quality of identification* of those whom they claim and regard as Jews. As a result, the glorifiers of "The Jewish Contribution to Civilization" not infrequently designate as Jews persons who have severed all connections with the Jewish community and the synagogue—and even individuals who have converted to Christianity.

Jewish law *(Halacha)* does not acknowledge the *legal* possibility of a Jew leaving the fold. The *Halacha* legislates on the assumption that once a Jew—always a Jew. Consequently, "a sinful Jew remains a Jew." Thus even the convert to another religion remains answerable to the *Halacha*. Like a lapsed Catholic, he is punishable by Jewish law while forfeiting the consolations and privileges of the synagogue. This was clearly stated in the recent decision of the Israel High Court in the Brother Daniel case, involving the former Oswald Rufeisen, now Brother Daniel. He sued because he was denied *automatic* Israel citizenship under the Israel Law of Return which confers citizenship on every Jew as soon as he sets foot on Israel soil. The decision stated that although Brother Daniel may be regarded as "a lapsed Jew" for the purposes of religion, he has forfeited the privileges of a Jew by his conversion to Catholicism.

Jewishness, however, is not an unbreakable tie of racial identity. One, therefore, cannot claim as a Jew Karl Landsteiner, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1930, years after he had officially left the Jewish religion and community. In point of fact, Dr. Landsteiner vigorously protested and threatened to sue when *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (Volume VIII, page 229) listed him among "Jewish Nobel Prize Winners."

Although Albert Einstein warmly acknowledged his Jewishness and was sympathetic to Jewish national aspirations and their consummation in the State of Israel, the theory of relativity is certainly not a "*Jewish* contribution to civilization." It is the achievement of a scientist who *happened* to be a Jew and whose Jewish background and identification had no connection with his scientific work.

Tracing the contribution of "The Jewish Idea," requires first of all a definition of this Idea and of the distinctive beliefs and affirmations which have influenced, motivated and decisively shaped Western civilization as a whole and the American culture in particular.

Commonplace and repetitious though it is, it must yet be restated that mankind has come to the brink of self-destruction owing to the fact that technology has outstripped the ethical brakes

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for its control. Our scientific ingenuity has tapped forces which our spiritual acumen cannot harness. Pitirim Sorokin wisely deplored the "sensate" orientation of our culture which relegates humanistic concerns to neglect. Certainly, it does not augur well for the future that instead of girding for the moral rearmament we, and all of mankind stand in need of, our school curricula are being revised so as "to strengthen" the scientific areas.

The "sensate" orientation of Western culture, however, is not the evil innovation of modernity. Indeed, "the sensate" achieved predominance in the 19th century when "ethical man," as postulated by religion, was supplanted by "man the scientific fact," but the glorification of "the outer man" rather than of "the inner man" was the norm in antiquity as well. Otherwise, how could the ancient Greeks have identified "the good" with "the beautiful" in the physical sense?

According to Archibald MacLeish, the ponderous "if" of survival and life *today* is whether "man can be taught to believe in the worth of man, in the dignity of man, in the characteristic perfection of man." Only if this is possible "can he be taught not only to survive but to live. If the world can be governed in belief in the worth of man, in the dignity of man, it can be governed in peace."

"The Jewish Idea" starts and is rooted in this affirmation, i.e., the axiomatic avowal of the dignity of man and his infinite value—man not as an abstract-philosophical concept but as the existential fact of the reality of every person—every man, woman and child. All men are created in the Divine image and, thus, "human brotherhood" is not a wishful, pious hope but the reality of existence. Of all Jewish contributions none is more important than the discovery that the unity of men—"One Mankind"—is the logical corollary of the One God. If, in the words of John Adams, "the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation," it was chiefly because they taught that "the other man" is, in fact, "fellowman."

A PITHY TALMUDIC HOMILY has it that God created only *one* man in the beginning so as to teach that we all are of equal descent. The American affirmation that "all men are created equal" was the credo of Judaism three millenia before Columbus discovered the New World. It is also the most precious single gift of Judaism, the mother, to Christianity, its eldest daughter.

Judaism, let there be no doubt about it, *is* "the religion of Law," although certainly not to the detriment of love. In contradistinction to Christian anti-nomism, Judaism insists that, as the title of a popular book has it, "Love Alone is Not Enough." As Judaism sees it, much of Christianity's failure to *christianize* its confessors, so that they would be able to control power with ethics, is due to reliance on the omnipotence of love. Now I do not say that Jews individually have done better in the realm of "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). But Judaism does not leave the Golden Rule to individual definition. It legislates *how* this love is to be put into action.

Thus the Law commands (and does not leave it to the appeal of ethics) that every person be respected because he is infused with a spark of the dignity of the Creator. This regard is due even to the criminal condemned to death. The *Halacha,* therefore, legislates how to safeguard the dignity of the one who has forfeited life. Thus, the condemned criminal was given a narcotic potion before being led to the place of execution. Also, once condemned on fool-proof evidence—this evidence was virtually unobtainable and, as a result, death sentences were extremely rare—the criminal had to be executed on the same day sentence was imposed because, the Sages said, "the fear of death is worse than death itself." No man must be deprived of the grace of the Image of God. No matter how much he himself may debase the Divine Image, the Presence of God does never completely depart from him and so his honor as a human being is inviolable.

The Aggadah (Talmudic folklore) elaborates on this axiom by means of numerous homilies. Thus, the Rabbis taught that God created only *one* man in the beginning so as to impress upon all descendants of Adam, for always and ever, each person must take it for granted as if for his sake alone the universe was created. Another Rabbinic

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teaching is that man was created "singly," in contrast to the animals, to emphasize human equality "so that no man may ever say 'my ancestors were of nobler descent than yours'." As for the universality and unity of mankind, the Rabbis pointed out that "when the Holy One, blessed be he, created Adam he collected the dust of which he was made from the four corners of the world." Man as "*the* ethical fact" has been the norm of the Jewish *Weltanschauung* as well as the primary preoccupation of Jewish religion and thought.

Inevitably, this preoccupation resulted in one-sidedness and the neglect of the "sensate." Thus, until the age of Jewish Emancipation and Assimilation, which commenced in Western Europe about the turn of the 19th century, Jews were not active in the arts. Also, the soil of the Holy Land has not yielded Israelite art objects of the type one would expect of a people that created the Bible. The few objects of art of Israelite origin are primitively crude. If it were not for the literary legacy of ancient Israel, one would have to conclude that the Hebrews were a people without a culture.

It is frequently being argued that the ancient Hebrews and their tradition-true descendants did not create and foster art as a result of loyalty to the Second Commandment. But as Israel Zangwill shrewdly observed, "a *chosen* people is a *choosing* people," and in the same vein one might say that revelation is self-disclosure. The Ten Commandments might therefore be interpreted as a record of the dialogue between God and Israel in which "the address" of Israel's self-revelation was objectified in "God's answer" of the Revelation. If one takes this stance, the Second Commandment is (and this, of course, also applies to the other Commandments) self-imposed in consequence of conviction. In the case of the Second Commandment the conviction is that concentration upon "the sensate" leads to the eclipse of "ethical man."

This "eclipse" is not a new bedevilment, although none of the religious thinkers and humanistic philosophers who have addressed themselves to the thermonuclear predicament seem to have recognized that there is no *qualitative* difference between the 20th century disdain of "man as an ethical fact" and the indifference to the dignity of man of the great culture of the ancient Middle East (Babylonia and Egypt) and of Greece and Rome.

The enormous palaces of Babylonia and Assyria and the imposing temples of Greece and Rome were built by slaves whom Aristotle defined as "animated machines." In all of the literatures of the ancient Middle East and of antiquity there is not one protest against the harrowing cost in human suffering with which this beauty and splendor of their civilizations was purchased. Only the conscience of ancient Israel—articulate in the voices of the Prophets—denounced the palaces and temples that were built by means of the exploitation and oppression of the poor. The German historian Heinrich von Treitschke held that "one statue of Phidias is well worth the misery endured by millions of slaves in antiquity." This cynicism is also the foundation of our "sensate" civilization which places THE MACHINE by any and by many different names above the worth of man.

The real issue here is the question of value: Is an artifact or a work of art more valuable than a human being, any person—even the lowliest?

When Leonardo's Mona Lisa was recently brought to this country, the painting crossed the ocean in super de-luxe accommodations costing $3,000 for the one-way passage. Now the Mona Lisa is unique and irreplaceable. Jewish ethics questions, however, whether it is legitimate to surround "an image" with such care and luxury when, presumably, men of the crew of the ship in which the Mona Lisa travelled were crowded into small, airless cabins.

It is putting this question which is the Jewish contribution to civilization and to America in particular—the question *and* the unequivocal answer that *always and ever man comes first*. Any man and every man takes precedence over the greatest work of art for man is *the* work of art of THE CREATOR. He is alive and thus has a claim on the supreme reverence—reverence for life.

MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO the ancient Hebrews discovered the solution

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for our contemporary problem contained in the fact that science and technology are out-distancing the indispensable controls of ethical purpose. Thermonuclear destruction hangs over our heads because we have elevated matter far above the spirit. We have creaed a Golem automaton of stupendous destructive powers and now lack the controls for keeping the monster in check and subservient. We are reaping the whirlwind of that which the predecessor civilizations of our Western civilization have sown when they placed the worth of the statue above that of man.

In his *The Dawn of Conscience* the eminent Egyptologist James H. Breasted marvelled at the "extraordinary fact that this great moral legacy [he had reference to the legacy of ancient Egypt] should have descended to Western civilization from a politically insignificant people," i.e., the Jews. Now, Breasted's pan-Egyptian theories of Hebrew origins are no longer accepted. "This great moral legacy" was not only transmitted by the Jews, "a politically insignificant people," but is their creation. *Conscience* is *the* Jewish contribution—the most distinctively Jewish discovery.

In his *Confessions*, Heinrich Heine perceptively contrasted the Greek spirit with the Jewish spirit. He wrote:

"Formerly I felt no special affection for Moses, probably because the Hellenic spirit was paramount in me, and I could not pardon the legislator of the Jews his hatred against the plastic arts. I did not see that, notwithstanding his hostility to art, Moses was a great artist and possessed the true artistic spirit. . . .He built human pyramids, carved human obelisks; he took a poor shepherd family and created a nation from it—a great, eternal, holy people, a people of God, destined to outlive the centuries, and to serve as a pattern to all other nations, even as a prototype for the whole of mankind. He created Israel. . . .As of the artist (Moses) so also I have not always spoken with sufficient respect of his work, the Jews . . . I see now that the Greeks were only handsome youths, while the Jews were always men, powerful, indomitable men, not only in olden days but even to this day, in spite of eighteen centuries of persecution and suffering."

According to the Sages of the Talmud, prophecy ceased when the Temple was destroyed. But, they noted, "although they (the Jews) are not phophets, they are yet the children of prophets." The Sages also stated that a Jew is characterized (or should be!) by *rachamin*—the mercy of compassion (compassion in the sense of its etymology of "co-suffering")—and they said that Jews are *rachmanim b'nai rachmanim*—compassionate children of compassionate parents.

American Jews, now predominantly native sons and daughters, are assimilated and integrated into the dominant culture. "The Jewish religious revival," like its Christian counterpart, is a mile wide and an inch deep. "Suburban Judaism" is the same variety of social phenomenon as "Suburban Christianity." And yet, beneath it all, there is the Jewish tradition sensed, if not remembered, even by those who have strayed far from the Law and the observances of the synagogue. The millenia-old religious affirmation that man is *the* supreme value (not merely the measure of all things!) and reverence for life and for the dignity of every human being continue to motivate even the most unsynagogued in American Jewry.

This regard for man as reflection of the Divine image is the Jewish motivation for "proclaiming liberty throughout all the land" (Leviticus 25:10). The four freedoms of the Roosevelt-Churchill "Atlantic Charter"—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear and freedom from want—were first proclaimed by Jewish law and ethics. Moreover, these freedoms were not mere ideals but norms of life as the Hebrew Bible proves. When American patriots declared that "rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God," they identified with the Hebrews enslaved by Pharaoh, as they were by the British. In all times and in many places rebels for a cause drew inspiration from the insurrection of the Hebrew Prophets who opposed the high and mighty of their days. This tradition of protest for conscience's sake was not innovated by the "writing Prophets," as is evident from the narrative which relates how Nathan condemned David for stealing the wife of Uriah and then seeing to the "accidental death" of her husband. Where in the ancient world would a man have dared to chastise the king for taking a woman he desired? And where in the ancient

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world would a king have humbly acknowledged that this is sin? Many a contemporary clergyman would not dare to upbraid the might of his flock in the manner Nathan tongue-lashed David, in keeping with the tradition of Freedom of Speech.

The ancient Hebrews spoke and protested freely even to God! They *argued* with the Lord. Thus when Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed, Abraham demanded of God: "Will You really sweep away the good along with the evil? (Genesis 18:24 ff.) And when God proclaimed that He was set on annihilating the entire host of Israel because of Korah's sin, Moses and Aaron challenged Him: "When one man sins, will You be wrathful with the whole congregation?" (Numbers 16:21)—and God reconsidered and punished only these sinners.

The Jewish labor leaders in this country who pioneered in the struggle for the rights of the worker to share in the good life were in the mainstream of the Jewish prophetic tradition. They exemplified the Jewish commitment to be in earnest about the God-given right of "freedom of speech" when half a century, and more, ago they campaigned for collective bargaining and organized labor. Wherever and whenever men have freely spoken their conscience and their convictions in the Western world, they were emboldened and strengthened by the examples of the spiritual heroes of ancient Israel who first proclaimed and *legislated* (this is important!) Freedom of Speech.

Freedom from Want is *now* built into our economy by means of Social Security enacted by law. Certainly it would be an exaggeration to say that modern Social Security systems are indebted to the Social Security system of ancient Israel (the tithe, the year of relase, the jubilee, etc.). It is relevant, however, that American social philosophy is fast moving in the direction of the ancient Jewish conviction that provision for the "underprivileged" must not be left to the discretion of the love of charity (*caritas*—love) but must be legislated. Significantly, the Hebrew word for "charity" is *tzedakah*, the primary meaning of which is *justice*. According to the great codifier Maimonides, (1135-1204), "gifts to the poor are not donations but debts one owes as of law." In the same sprit, the eminent Rabbinic scholar Meir of Rotheburg (ca. 1220-1293) declared that "the poor have a definite claim on the tithe-money."

ORGANIZED JEWISH CHARITY—the oldest social service system—has a history of over two thousand years, predating the destruction of the Second Temple (70 A.D.). At that time, Jewish communities had publicly raised and administered relief funds—one for major and regular relief and one for emergency, short-term assistance. All members of the community were "taxed" for these funds, although the amount was left to their conscience. However, if those in charge of the relief tax had reason to suspect that an individual gave less than the tithe of 10 per cent, legal proceedings could be instituted for the collection of *lawful* amount. Until Emancipation, Jewish self-government was the norm and the Rabbinical courts could and did attach the property of delinquent tax payers.

There is no area of "social security" which was not made a Law. The makers of Judaism had an optimistic outlook on man's perfectability. They were realists, however, and knew that "social security" must be legislated and not left to "charity."

Judaism is not an aggressively missionary religion although it is profoundly imbued with the sense of the mission given to Abraham: "Be a blessing unto all the families of the earth" (Genesis 12:3). Although God stands in a special covenant relationship to Israel, salvation is not restricted to Jews. The teachers of the Mishna taught: "The righteous of all the nations have a share in the world-to-come." Everybody can be righteous. Commenting on Psalm 146:8: "The Lord loves the righteous," a pithy Rabbinic commentary states: "Righteousness is not inherited. . . . Everybody can qualify for being righteous, even a pagan, for righteousness is not acquired by descent but by personal effort."

Now, the Hebrew Bible swarms with condemnations of idolatry. But their motivation was not religious zeal on behalf of God, but the horror of the atrocities and inhumanity of the idolatrous cults, like human sacrifices, temple prostitution, and all the vices of an unaroused or atrophied so-

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cial conscience. To the Prophets of Israel, idolatry was not so much a religious affront as an ethical challenge. They inveighed against Baal, Moloch and Astarte not because they impinged upon the majesty of the Only God but because their cults degraded the image of God.

As for "the righteous Gentiles" who are assured of a share in the world-to-come, they must keep seven basic laws, the so-called "Noahide Laws"; namely, institution of law courts, abstaining from blaspheming the Name of God (they need not, however, believe in Him or worship Him), abstaining from idolatrous practices, murder, robbery, and partaking of the meat cut from an animal while alive.

In the scheme of Freedom of Religion, as evolved and legislated by Judaism, every man is free to follow his conscience. The makers of Judaism took the same attitude on which American legislators and courts act. Freedom of Religion is vouchsafed provided it does not interfere with public welfare. For example, the Mormons are free to believe that polygamy is the will of God, but as American citizens they are forbidden to contract polygamous marriages because our society considers polygamy a social evil. Similarly, adult members of certain Christian sects are free to reject medical treatment and blood transfusions, but in the case of minors, physicians, armed with court orders, can operate and administer blood transfusions over the "religious protest" of the parents. In Judaism, as in American law, the presumption is that "Freedom of Religion" does not mean that injurious and unethical actions may be justified in the name of God.

The Jewish "great right" of "Freedom of Religion" is predicated on the conviction that salvation is universal and available to all "righteous" persons. It is this conviction which "The Jewish Idea" has deeply impressed on American democracy.

"Freedom from Fear" is vouchsafed to every American by the "Bill of Rights," which limits the power of government lest it interfere with "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Everywhere, almost until our own times, the masses stood in fear of the high and the mighty who wielded absolute power and who were above the law. The kings and the aristocracy did as they pleased, and proclaimed this as the will of the gods or of God. Not so in ancient Israel, however, where the ruler, like the ruled, was subjected to the Law and its single standard. How "Freedom from Fear" was vouchsafed in ancient Israel is evident from the narrative about Naboth's vineyard (I Kings, chapter 21). It is immaterial whether the event described is "historical." What matters is that it is taken for granted that the King of Israel *cannot* appropriate the possession of one of his subjects against the man's will, even if he is fully indemnified. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, a daughter of the King of Tyre, however, thought her husband was debasing his royal dignity by accepting Naboth's answer: "I shall not give my vineyard to you." In the authoritarian-absolutist tradition, accepted everywhere amongst Israel's neighbors, she had Naboth murdered and his vineyard confiscated.

Freedom from Fear, in the American definition, also means that every person has access to the court and may sue for his rights. It stands for the constitutional right of peaceful demonstration and picketing and guarantees that freedom of speech and freedom of religion can be asserted without fear of reprisals, as is the case in the Soviet Union and its satellites.

The American idea is the sum total of "the great liberties"—the only logical derivatives of the premise of the unique and unlimited worth and dignity of every one who reflects the image of God *because* he has human form. The commitment to this premise and all that is built on it made Israel a unique people. It made the Bible the single and singular book which has begotten and nurtured that which is "Christian" in Western civilization. The Jewish contribution to America is no less than the "American idea" itself—"the great liberties" which the founding fathers of this republic proclaimed and constitutionally assured under the impact of the book which was their constant companion and guide—the book they revered as holy—The Bible which, unlike Plato's "Republic" (governed by and for aristocrats) preached, and sometimes succeeded in establishing, government of the people, by the people and for the people, under God and in freedom.

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Leonard E. Nathan

LEONARD E. NATHAN *was born in Los Angeles in 1924. Dr. Nathan was educated at the University of California (Berkeley), and he presently teaches there in the Department of Speech. He has published two volumes of poetry:* Western Reaches *(Talisman, 1958) and* Glad and Sorry Seasons *(Random House, 1963). The two poems he contributes to this Symposium are examples of his most recent work. He is presently translating the* Odes *of Pindar.*

TWO DOORS

I ENTERED the temple through that golden door
Marked "As You Wish" for men of dreamed affairs,
And there I saw a service shaped of faces
Beautifully come human to their prayers;
The rabbi sang them: "Whole, be whole," and they,
Assenting, O already were. The Law,
Like all good will fulfilled, was gently done,
And Spirit, released, bore up its branch of awe.

Some natural call required my absence, yet,
Still wanting to be found, I came again,
But through the common door, and you know what
I saw: improbability of men
Hardened to face the stone they daily break,
The rabbi muttering in his moody gown,
And no one home. I rose, and cursing, went,
Though gentile darkness roofed the self-made town.

The world can't stand this schism for much more.
Worse—and I feel this in my bones like fever—
The word must come from me. I'd call on God,
But He has left the temple, no believer.

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THE PILGRIMAGE

I'M HERE AGAIN; you *must* remember me:
Last spring the blossoms that I lost—let's see—
Were apple, cherry, apricot and plum;
I stood here waiting for the fruit to come,
Tree by slow tree,
Into its ripeness; so it did, and fell.
You promised us some explanation. Well?

Or did you? Someone we trusted wrote that down;
He'd heard it from a scholar of a town
Built on mere speculation. Another swore
He had it from three Asians at his door,
Each with a crown,
But begging for a handout. Men *have* lied;
Sages have bitten too and shortly died.

Bees are content to hive a little good
And honey out their briefness. Knock on wood,
I'm not too proud. But what I want I need,
And, after all, the best men have agreed,
Or said they could,
That you, if rightly asked, have once and may
Again unriddle ripeness. Not today.

I'm going now, but when next year, well done,
The harvest leaves us naked under the sun—
The moon-like sun, I'm coming back,
These cores of gnawing apples in my sack.
Though it's all one,
And time seems colder, words less good to know,
I'm coming back. Where else is there to go?

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Harold U. Ribalow

THE JEWISH SIDE OF AMERICAN LIFE

HAROLD U. RIBALOW *is a critic who addresses himself almost exclusively to Jewish themes and to the Jewish community. Since 1945 he has edited various Jewish periodicals, such as* Congress Weekly *and* The American Zionist. *Mr. Ribalow is a regular contributor to* The Jewish Exponent, The Jerusalem Post, The London Jewish Chronicle, Commentary *and other Jewish journals of opinion; he has also contributed to* Saturday Review, New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, The Nation *and* Catholic World. *Mr. Ribalow is co-editor of* The Great Jewish Books, *and he is an editor of* The Reconstructionist *and of the forthcoming* Encyclopedia Judaica *(to be published in Israel).*

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IN ANY DISCUSSION of the Jewish contribution to American culture, one must define what is specifically Jewish in the writings of an American Jew who expresses himself as an American in the English language.

Is Norman Mailer writing as an American—or as a Jew—when he describes a handful of Jewish soldiers in *The Naked and the Dead?* Was Arthur Miller thinking of Jewish salesmen when he wrote *Death of a Salesman*, and is this a "Jewish" contribution because Miller is Jewish? Do Maxwell, Geismar, Leslie A. Fiedler or Alfred Kazin write as Jews or do they judge works of creative fiction without any awareness of or regard for their Jewish background?

Although the Jewish people have faced—and overcome—many problems, there still remains puzzlement over the question of "What is a Jew?", and this issue recently has been discussed and developed not only within the borders of the state of Israel, but also in synagogues all over the country. The question, then, of what is Jewish in literary terms may be at least as bewildering. But some lines must be drawn and a definition reached.

For the purposes of this essay, I should like to submit a definition first stated by the noted Jewish writer and thinker, Ludwig Lewisohn, who spent his entire lifetime mulling Jewish questions and seeking the meaning to Jewish identity. In *The Answer* (1939), Lewisohn offered this as his own guide as to what makes a Jewish book:

A Jewish book is a book by a Jew who knows that his ultimate self is Jewish and that his creativity and that deepest self are one. *He need not know or express or define that conceptually. Feeling, hint, presage at highest moments will suffice. A Jewish book is a book written by a man who knows he is a Jew. Jewish literature consists of those books, written in whatever age or tongue, whose authors know that they were* jüdische Menschen, *that they were* homines judaici, *and who, in the great old phrase of Sir Philip Sidney, looked into their hearts to write.*

It is on this basis that I shall deal with the authors who have enriched American Jewish literature and who have, at the same time, made an "impact" on the larger American public.

What, however, does "impact" mean? Most books, as publishers, critics and authors themselves know, have a comparatively small sale. Ten thousand books sold of a single title makes that book a best-seller, but how significant is 10,000 in a nation like ours? On the other hand, a book need not be a best-seller to become important. The novels of Herbert Gold, Daniel Fuchs and Bernard Malamud, to select a few writers of different ages, have not been best-sellers, but no intellectual reader and close student of contemporary American letters will deny the influence of these men, at different stages of American literary development.

Still, impact can be measured. We can gauge both by popular and by critical attention and acclaim. When a Harry Golden comes on the scene, it is easy enough to say that he has made an impact. His books sell widely; they are reviewed in literary media all over the nation; and Golden himself has become a national personality. His column is syndicated across the land; he is a popular guest on various television programs; he has even made a record. He is as well known today as Will Rogers was in a less sophisticated era.

In order to understand the phenomenon of a Harry Golden, however, it may be illuminating to look back a few decades to see how Jewish literary influence has changed in the United States.

Early in this century, Jewish writing—when it appeared at all—was considered "special," not necessarily completely "American." Although William Saroyan's Armenians and James T. Farrell's Chicago Irish were treated as Americans, Anzia Yezierska's immigrant Jews on New York's East Side were, somehow, foreigners. A case in point is the history of Ludwig Lewisohn. When Lewisohn devoted himself to drama criticism, to literary history and to translating German playwrights into English, he was highly ranked as an American opinion maker and molder. When he "returned" to Judaism and began to propagandize for Zionism and to exhort the American Jew to probe into his Jewish heritage (and accept it), Lewisohn rather rapidly vanished as an "American" writer. The major literary histories either bypassed him or gave him very short shrift. He

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Norman Mailer

Irwin Shaw

had "gone Jewish" and therefore, almost by definition, no longer was an "American" writer. More significantly, his later books, dealing with Palestine, with Jewish identity, with intermarriage and its negative effect on Jewish survival, were read mainly by Jews. After *The Island Within*, none of Lewisohn's novels sold well, and perhaps *The Island Within*, as one of the earliest fictional accounts of intermarriage, made an impression because of its sensationalism. Otherwise and thereafter, Lewisohn was an outsider, an alien, no longer a totally "American" writer.

Maurice Samuel, one of the most distinguished of Jewish authors and an extraordinary English stylist, has produced more than twenty books in some five decades, but has not been able to "break through" as an "American" writer. He has won some awards, a few of his books have made an impression on the Jewish reading public, but he, like Lewisohn, is absent from the literary histories and is, in general, a name unknown to the larger American reading public.

OTHER, SOMEWHAT YOUNGER, writers have, in a sense, suffered the same fate. Charles Angoff comes to mind. The managing editor of the *American Mercury* in the H. L. Mencken era, Angoff has been a prolific writer and an influential editor and teacher. In 1951, he published the first in a series of novels about Jewish life in the United States. At this writing five volumes have appeared, with at least four more due. It is a gargantuan project, encompassing the entire Jewish American experience. Through his major protagonist, David Polansky, Angoff traces the lives of dozens of Polanskys and other members and friends of the family. The books have been favorably reviewed, when critics have taken the trouble to read them. Meyer Levin, another Jewish writer largely overlooked, has called Angoff's novels of Nobel Prize caliber. But so far, these five novels (*Journey to the Dawn; In the Morning Light; The Sun at Noon; Between Day and Dark; The Bitter Spring*) have had no impact beyond a limited Jewish readership.

Nevertheless, a great many popular writers have broken through to popularity and the cumulative effect of their work has been to present to

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the non-Jewish reader a portrait of the American Jew which could not be drawn by the Christian author. James Jones in *From Here to Eternity*, Stephen Vincent Benet in some short stories (notably "Jacob and the Indians"), John Horne Burns in *The Gallery*, have attempted to portray American Jews, but these writers are outside the Jewish experience and their work is less authentic than the novels and stories of Jewish writers.

This is not to say that Jewish novelists usually take the "public relations" approach, although Saul Bellow and Philip Roth are among those who constantly complain that too many Jewish authors, while writing, ask themselves "What will the Gentiles say and think?" Surely, Jerome Weidman in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* and *What's in It for Me?*, both issued in the late 1930's (when Hitler was rising to power), and in *The Enemy Camp*, published as recently as 1958, has not been overly worried about Jewish reactions. His "hero," Harry Bogen, in his two early novels, is an unscrupulous, hateful garment industry operator. The theme of *The Enemy Camp* is Jewish distrust and dislike of Christians. Again, sensitive themes are not blinked by Weidman. Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?* is by now the classic portrait of the "Hollywood heel," who happens to have been Jewish. Obviously, Sammy Glick is not cast in the "public relations" mold.

Yet the Jews in the Weidman and Schulberg novels have been accepted in some quarters as authentic and realistic portrayals of American Jews. The question here is, what impact has this image had? Is Sammy Glick the *real* Jew, or must we turn to his father and brother or to the Jewish narrator of the book to discover the actual Jew? Is Harry Bogen an honest picture of the garment industry Jew, or should we have to turn to Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*, written in 1917, for a more balanced appraisal?

In 1947, there was a major breakthrough in the popularity of Jewish themes when Laura Z. Hobson published *Gentleman's Agreement*. Looking back at this novel, from the vantage point of 1963, the Hobson book was trivial and tricky. The question of social anti-Semitism is far less significant today than it was fifteen years ago. Besides, *Gentleman's Agreement* was a slick job of work; its Jews were, in the main, uncommitted Jews; and one of its major Jewish spokesmen was anti-Zionist, thus surely not representing the average American-Jewish attitude. Still, it was a national best-seller; it was serialized in a slick woman's magazine; it was a paperback sensation and, more important, it *did* call a pattern of anti-Semitism to the attention of millions of Americans who probably gave Jew-hating and baiting very little attention and thought. In this sense, *Gentleman's Agreement* made an impact.

It did something else. It demonstrated to major publishers, usually ultra-cautious and conservative, that a book about Jews need not be limited to Jewish readers alone. It was, thus, not unexpected that within the next decade, popular Jewish writers would gain acceptability as "American" writers. Where once the Jewish writer was outside the mainstream of American culture, he now was within it. With the passage of less than two decades, Jewish writers and their books became warp and woof of the American fabric.

In the continuing series of war fiction, the Jewish soldier was a staple; not only in books by Jews, but by non-Jewish novelists as well. James Jones, in *From Here to Eternity*, depicted his version of the American-Jewish GI, as did Norman Mailer and Irwin Shaw. The Jew was now an American, not a peculiar hothouse plant in the American garden of literature.

It was, therefore, logical and inevitable that a Herman Wouk, a Leon Uris and a Harry Golden appear on the American literary scene. Wouk attained the cover of *Time* magazine, an accolade of acceptability granted to few novelists. Uris' novels on Israel and on the Warsaw Ghetto (*Exodus* and *Mila 18*) reached astronomical sales. Golden's essays, in four best-selling books, became representative of the contemporary Jewish mind in America.

Hitherto, the Jewish writer felt he was addressing a limited Jewish readership, huddled in the large metropolitan areas of the nation. Now, suddenly, he was a spokesman not only for his fellow Jews but also for the alienated American intellectual who had found in the Jewish writer and his work a reflection of his own problems.

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ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS with the rediscovery of the Jewish creative writer, there came the emergence of the literary critic who was Jewish and who paid attention to Jewish novelists and short story writers. Leslie A. Fiedler, a teacher and critic, started to review books by Jews, to lecture about Jewish novelists and to produce brochures about their work. Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, Maxwell Geismar and David Boroff, all prolific and influential, spent a good part of their time reading Jewish novels and discussing them in the literary quarterlies, the quality magazines and the review media. No longer was the Jewish book overlooked. The era of indifference was over. Jewish novels were selected by major book clubs, and even the high-quality writers were winning the attention of the mass audience.

Bernard Malamud's brilliant little novel *The Assistant*, a story concerning a poverty-stricken Jewish grocer and a guilt-ridden Italian, was a candidate for the National Book Award. A year later, Malamud's collection of short stories, nearly every one of them about Jews, *The Magic Barrel and Other Stories*, was a National Book Award winner. It was the first time in the history of American book prize-giving, that a completely Jewish work of art had gained such recognition. Then, when Philip Roth emerged, he was immediately welcomed by the critics, if not entirely by the reading public. *Goodbye, Columbus*, because it dealt bitterly with Jews and Jewish character, was accepted uneasily in Jewish circles. But it hit a nerve, in time. Jewish critics, writing for Jewish journals, wrote long essays about Roth's self-hatred and questioned the artistic authenticity of his outlook. But *Goodbye, Columbus* also won the National Book Award, and Philip Roth gained attention as a potentially major American writer. His first novel, a long and sometimes tedious account of collegiate Jews and intermarriage, was *Letting Go*. It earned a front-page review in the New York Times Sunday Book Review, and Roth was now one of the American "giants." He became a writer-in-residence at Princeton; he was popular on the lecture circuit and was constantly being invited to participate in symposia. Two decades earlier, a Jewish writer producing a handful of short stories about Jews and a single novel

Alfred Kazin

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would have been forgotten in a brief period of time. Not today. Now he becomes an important figure on the American scene.

Other quality writers have broken through and are read by the general American public, not by Jews alone. Each one of them brings his own insights to his work and somehow manages to speak to all Americans, even though he may elect to choose Jewish characters and themes and conflicts.

The new acceptability of the Jew in fiction is dramatically demonstrated by the revival of certain Jewish books which, upon their publication in the 1930's, had received good notices but no readers. Two examples are Henry Roth and Daniel Fuchs.

At the very end of 1934, Henry Roth published his one novel, *Call It Sleep*. It was a remarkable work of art, evoking the tensions in the heart and mind of a young Jewish boy living in the slums of New York City. It was written with poetic insight and in difficult prose, after the style of James Joyce. Roth understood his children and his immigrant Jews who found no peace on the New York streets. He wrote of his young hero's relationship with his mother and his hatred for his father. He had no sense of belonging and envied a young Catholic friend who, he felt, had a sense of security. Roth's book is a classic of American fiction, but it had made its initial impact on a handful of readers and critics and then it vanished. In 1960, it was reprinted, with introductions by this writer, Maxwell Geismar and Meyer Levin. It was a book club selection and again was widely reviewed as a great book, both in this country and in England, where it has now been reissued. Had the Wouks, Urises and Goldens not emerged, it would have been even more difficult for *Call It Sleep* to be introduced to a new generation of readers.

The same holds true for Daniel Fuchs, who, at about the time *Call It Sleep* was dying its first death, published three novels about Jewish life in Brooklyn during the 1930's. They were *Summer in Williamsburg*, *Homage to Blenholt* and *Low Company*. Fuchs recalls that on publication they made little impression. "The books didn't sell," he writes. "400 copies, 400, 1200. The reviews

Philip Roth

Saul Bellow

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were scanty, immaterial."

Yet in 1961 all three were made available in a single volume and earned respectful notices in the *Times* and elsewhere and also were selected by a book club. They did not win the audience attracted to Uris or Wouk, but they gained thousands of readers who, in the 1960's, have become accustomed to books about Jewish Americans seeking their identity as Americans.

Meanwhile, the Jewish writer knows that when he chooses to draw his materials from his own life, he will be listened to and not brushed aside. Perhaps this is why there are so many novelists of Jewish extraction who produce "Jewish" books.

SAUL BELLOW, ranked by many critics as the foremost American novelist of our time, has written on a wide variety of themes. Still, he has not hesitated to write on anti-Semitism (in his gem-like little novel *The Victim*) or on eccentric, wild Jews in his masterwork *The Adventures of Augie March*, which Leslie Fiedler has called the finest Jewish novel ever written about American Jewish life.

Herbert Gold, Harvey Swados and James Yaffe are all of the younger generation—younger, that is, than Weidman, Wouk and Uris—and every one of them has written about morality and ethics and American behavior in the fashion that identifies them as Jews, granting Ludwig Lewisohn's definition of a Jewish writer.

Still younger writers continue to make their appearance and they, too, carefully select dramatic Jewish characters around whom to tell their stories. Two new authors, within the past year, have given us memorable novels which, again, have not been passed over by the critics but have been widely praised. The first is Bruce Jay Friedman's *Stern;* the second is Norman Fruchter's *Coat Upon a Stick.*

Friedman and Fruchter are young: Friedman was born in 1930 and Fruchter in 1937. They are brilliant and it is interesting that they have not hesitated to write on subjects which, in the decade in which they themselves were born, would have attracted only Jewish readers. Now, their books are widely read.

Friedman's novel, like so many others, concerns anti-Semitism, but his is an unusual approach. His hero, Stern, is an introverted, neurotic Jew whose wife is subjected to humiliation by a Jew-baiting neighbor. Stern suffers a nervous breakdown because of the slight to his wife and eventually recovers. The story line is not strong. What makes the novel remarkable is Friedman's mordant humor, his ironic view of life and his semi-existentialist outlook. It is an imaginative book and the fact that Friedman has been warmly praised for it indicates that even the subject of anti-Semitism can intrigue thousands of readers untouched by intolerance toward the Jew.

Fruchter has written a more intensely Jewish story. His hero is an aged, pious Jew—a dirty old man, with few virtues, with a warped view of his son and his fellow Jews. That Fruchter has been able to invest his old man (the hero is never named) with dignity and that he has managed to evoke sympathy and pity for the old man is a demonstration of his skill. A few decades ago, such a book would have languished and would, at best, have been read by a handful of Jewish readers. Today, it has served to gain for him a notable reputation and to win attention in most critical media.

Curiously, the American Jew has contributed comparatively little to American poetry. I say curiously because Hebrew and Yiddish literature both are rich in poets. In English, somehow, Jewish poetry languishes. Even Yiddish-language prose writers have left an impact on the American public. Sholem Asch has become an internationally known novelist; I. J. Singer, author of *The Brothers Ashkenazi*, also became a best-seller; and his younger brother, Isaac Bashevis Singer, is now recognized as the greatest living Yiddish writer and one whose work has captured the imagination of the American public. I. B. Singer's short story "Gimpel the Fool," translated into English by Saul Bellow, has been widely anthologized, and his novels (*The Magician of Lublin*, *The Family Moskat* and *The Slave*) have enraptured the critics and those readers who love tales of high imagination and symbolism. Even *Satan in Goray*, a story of a false messiah and his impact on a Jewish community in seventeenth-century Poland

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Arthur Miller

(written in the 1930's), has achieved the status of a small classic. Singer's short stories are remarkable for their evocation of evil and for the introduction of devils, evil spirits and creatures of the nether-world. Singer's appeal is so great that recently the *Saturday Evening Post* published four of his stories in a single issue of the magazine.

Still, returning to American Jewish poets, the field is rather barren. Karl Shapiro, a Pulitzer Prize winner, is perhaps the best known of Jewish poets, and his own awareness of his heritage has led him to issue a book of carefully selected verse, entitled *Poems of a Jew*. Delmore Schwartz, a poet and short story writer, is also one of the best of American Jewish poets. A third is Charles Reznikoff, who has been producing fine lyrics for four decades and who has had belated recognition, mainly, I suspect, because his latest book carries an introduction by the noted British novelist and essayist C. P. Snow. Otherwise, the Jew has not done well in this field.

In recent years, some Jewish playwrights have emerged, but in most instances their dramas have little to do with Jewish material or values. S. N. Behrman, a veteran playwright, is known for many drawing-room comedies, although he has also been writing his memoirs, drawing heavily from his Jewish youth. Arthur Miller, one of the giants of the American theatre, has carefully avoided writing about Jews in his plays, although his novel *Focus* and some of his short stories are concerned with Jews. Miller's attitude is well expressed in a speech he delivered in the late 1940's, in which he said, "I think I gave up the Jews as literary material because I was afraid then even an innocent allusion to the individual wrongdoing of an individual Jew would be inflamed by the atmosphere, ignited by the hatred I suddenly was aware of, and my love would be twisted into a weapon of persecution against Jews. No good writer can approach material in that atmosphere. I cannot censor myself without thwarting my passion for writing itself. I turned away from the Jews as material for my work. . . . When I confront the prospect of writing about Jewish life my mood is defensive and combative."

In spite of this statement, Miller did return, years later, to Jewish themes—from time to time. But other writers have this same defensiveness. Karl Shapiro once wrote, "I try to write freely, one day as a Christian, the next as a Jew." Later, in his introduction to *Poems of a Jew*, which is confused and puzzling, Shapiro said, "As a Jew I grew up in an atmosphere of mysterious pride and sensitivity, an atmosphere in which even the greatest achievement was touched by a sense of the comic. Isolated within my own world, like a worm in an apple, I became a poet."

Paddy Chayefsky, on the other hand, discovered his richest materials in his Judaism. In "The Tenth Man" and in "Gideon" he sought to understand the mysteries of the Jewish religion and,

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even though his work is marred by slickness, he has come through to a generation of Americans seeking meaning in religion and in religious customs and traditions.

THE FOREGOING offers, I hope, some insight into the Jewish writers of our time and their acceptance as American writers. But the question as to why the Jewish writer is now considered part of the American literary mainstream, when once he was thought to be alien, remains unanswered. Perhaps I can offer an explanation.

More and more, the Jew in America has become part of the totality of American life. The Jew who served in the American armed forces during the Second World War met, for the first time, other Americans—and other Americans met him. Jewish novels about the War, then, became American novels and not specialized Jewish books. And non-Jewish Americans also found, when they wrote *their* books, that their attitudes toward the Jews was a gauge of their tolerance and understanding of the hitherto unknown American, the Jewish American. In dozens of war novels the Jew appeared as a fellow American. His strangeness and "alienness" vanished. And this carried over into books on other subjects as well.

The Jew, as he broke out of his ghetto and won entry into the business, academic and artistic world, appeared in the works of important American writers. Once, the Jew was an eccentric character, in books by Ernest Hemingway (*The Sun Also Rises*), Thomas Wolfe (throughout his four novels, and especially in *Look Homeward, Angel*) and F. Scott Fitzgerald (*The Last Tycoon*). Now he was just another American in the works of James Jones, Martha Gellhorn, James Gould Cozzens, Katherine Anne Porter, John Hersey and others equally noted.

Jewish writers like J. D. Salinger, who wrote of Jews only vaguely; like Nelson Algren, who mentioned them in passing; Philip Roth and Myron Kaufmann, who wrote of them bitterly; Charles Angoff and Meyer Levin, who wrote of them lovingly—all were accepted without too much sensitivity. Moreover, the new novel of the university, like Bernard Malamud's *A New Life*, became a staple of American fiction, and the Jew appeared with frequency in these books, too. Even Edmund Wilson and Mary McCarthy, in personal narratives that read like fiction, introduced Jewish characters. The Jew had become part of American fiction and, as such, was fair game for all writers, Jewish or non-Jewish.

The establishment of Israel has played a role in this new acceptance of the Jew. *Exodus* by Uris persuaded the American reader that the Jew could be a hero, and so the non-Jewish American could read, without feeling unusual or peculiar, *Exodus* or *Marjorie Morningstar* on the subway, just as the theatre-goer could spend an evening watching Paddy Chayefsky's "The Tenth Man" without considering himself odd.

Slowly, the non-Jewish American began to understand that the Jew had the same problems others had; that in spite of Israel, in spite of "curious" Jewish eating habits, the Jew was like himself: he loved and he had ambitions, and he worried about getting a job, about moving to the suburbs and about the meaning of God and religion.

As the Jew has become an American, so has the American become aware of the Jew—and it is here that the Jewish writer has made his impact. William Faulkner was a Southern writer, but he was more than that; William Saroyan wrote about Armenians, but he was also an American. The Jewish writer is as American as any American, even when he writes, as Henry Roth did, about a young Jewish boy in Brooklyn; or as Leslie Fiedler does, about the Jewish academic; or Philip Roth does, about the Jewish suburbanite or soldier, or Charles Angoff does, about the immigrant Jew finding a home, life and meaning in Boston and New York, or Michael Blankfort does, about the modern, "Americanized" rabbi in love with a modern girl.

As America grows older, the "minority" culture becomes part of the larger American culture, yet it continues to retain its differences, and in doing so, enriches all America.

The Jewish writer in the United States, describing his fellow Jews, is contributing to our literature and, while reacting to the American society, is making a profound impact upon it.

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LESLIE A. FIEDLER *is the most controversial postwar literary critic. His celebrated essay,* "Come Back To The Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey!", *appeared in* Partisan Review *in 1948. Later essays have appeared in* Partisan Review, Commentary, Encounter, Esquire, Playboy *and* RAMPARTS. *Perhaps his most significant book is a long "study in depth" of American fiction,* Love And Death In The American Novel *(1960); this subtle exposition of the "Gothic" quality of the American novel in the years 1789-1959 is, along with Edmund Wilson's* Patriotic Gore *(1962), one of the most provocative of recent books. Dr. Fiedler's penetrating shorter essays on politics and culture have been collected in* An End To Innocence *(1955) and* No! In Thunder *(1961). He is presently writing a book on American Jewish writers. Dr. Fiedler, who lives in Missoula, Montana, is an Associate Editor of* RAMPARTS.

Leslie A. Fiedler

THE JEW AS MYTHIC AMERICAN

WE LIVE AT A MOMENT when everywhere in the realm of prose Jewish writers have discovered their Jewishness to be an eminently marketable commodity, their much vaunted alienation to be their passport into the heart of Gentile American culture. It is, indeed, their quite justified claim to have been *first* to occupy the Lost Desert at the center of the Great American Oasis (toward which every one now races, Coca-Cola in one hand, Martin Buber in the other) which has made certain Jewish authors into representative Americans, even in the eyes of State Department officials planning cultural interchanges. The autobiography of the urban Jew, whose adolescence coincided with the Depression and who walked the banks of some contaminated city river with tags of Lenin ringing in his head, who went forth (or managed not to) to a World War in which he could not quite believe—has come to seem part of the mythical life history of a nation. Even in the realm of poetry, writers of Jewish origin begin, for the first time, not only to project the most viable images of what it means to be an American, but to determine the cadences with

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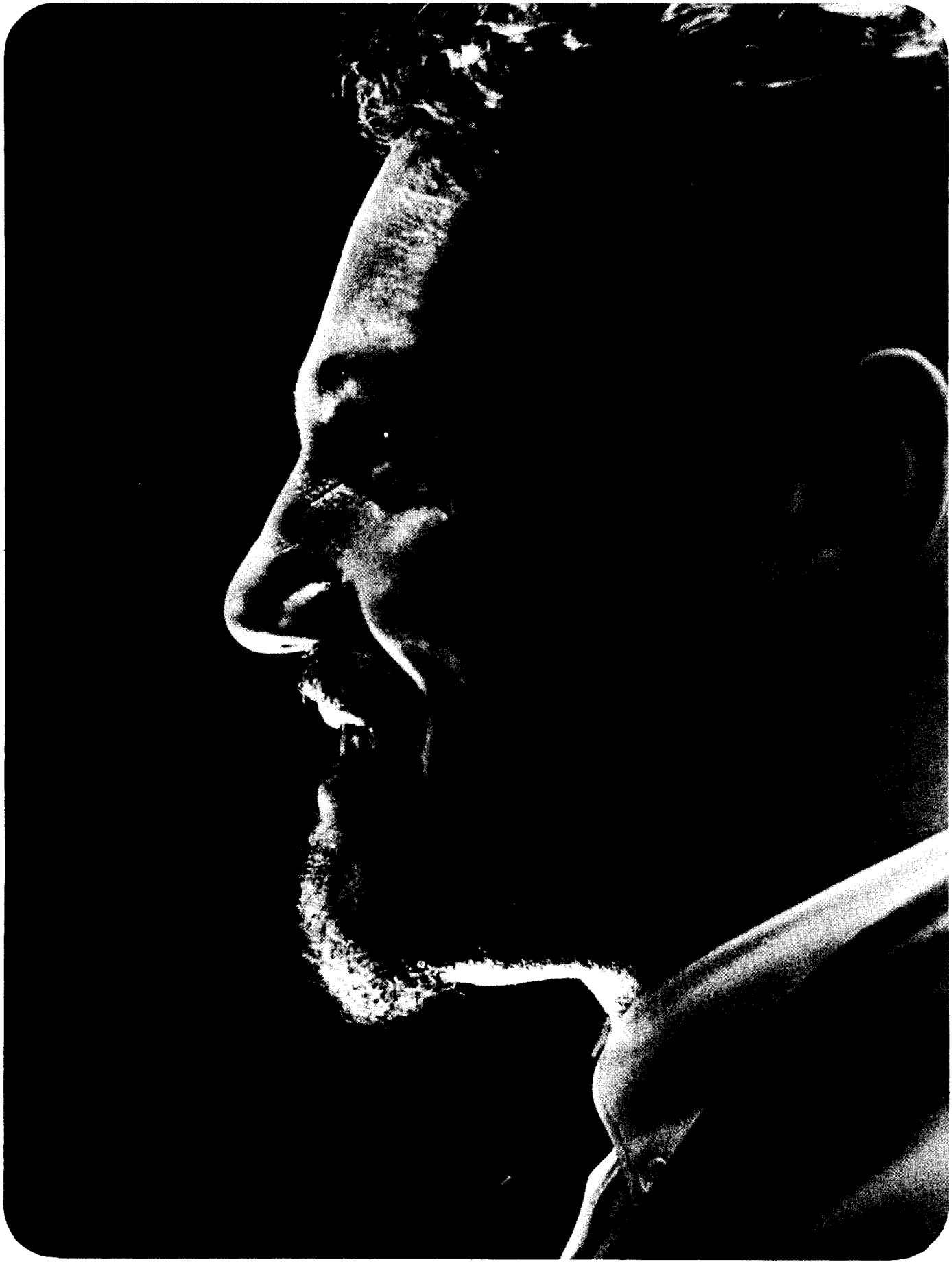

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which we glorify or deplore that condition. The very lines inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty are, to be sure, by Emma Lazarus, who called one collection of her poems, *Songs of a Semite*; but it was not until appearance of Delmore Schwartz and Karl Shapiro, in the years just before and after World War II, that Jewish-American poets succeeded in producing verse capable of living in libraries and the hearts of other poets, rather than on monuments and in the mouths of politicians. And only within the last decade, has a poet as Jewish in his deepest memories (whatever his current allegiances) as Allen Ginsberg been able to stand at the head of a new poetic movement.

Yet the moment of triumph for the Jewish writer in the United States has come just when his awareness of himself as a Jew is reaching a vanishing point, when the gesture of rejection seems his last possible connection with his historical past; and the popular acceptance of his alienation as a satisfactory symbol for the human condition threatens to turn it into an affectation, a fashionable cliché. Indeed, the recent recognition of even the most serious Jewish American writers seems somehow less an event in literary history, than an incident in the development of middle-brow taste: part of the minor revolution which has made Harry Golden into a modern prophet, and has enabled newspapers to build circulation by running serializations of the latest pseudo-books of Leon Uris. Surely, a kind of vicarious shame at the monstrosities practised against the Jews of Germany by the Nazis has something to do with this revolution; and the establishment of the State of Israel has tended to give even the Jews in exile a less ambiguous status; while the struggle against Great Britain leading to that establishment has lent them a certain sentimental cachet, ranking them in the minds of American Anglo-phobes with the Irish and the mythical revolutionary ancestors of us all.

But it is chiefly the resurgence of "intergroup understanding," the tidal wave of toleration that has flowed into the vacuum left by the disappearance of zeal and the attentuation of faith among churchgoers which has carried the Jews along with it. And they have benefited, too, by the canonization of support for "little people" among the pieties of yesterday's liberalism which have become the orthodoxy of today's New Deal-New Frontier conservatism. Armenians, Greeks, Chinese, Cubans, low-caste Indians, Mexican wetbacks, women without suffrage, paraplegics, teen-agers: one group after another has been dubbed with that condescending tag. But, maybe, from this point of view the ordeal of the Jew is almost over, for he no longer occupies the number one slot among the insulted and injured. Even the *New Yorker* has recognized that the Negro is, at the moment, *up*; and it is the Baldwins rather than the Bellows who have to wrestle now with the mystery of the failure of success in America. Still, however, the general *détente* in the cold war between gentile and Jew in the United States persists; and though other sentimental fashions challenge it, it remains chic in certain middlebrow, middleclass, middle-liberal quarters to be pro-Jewish. Philo-Semitism is required—or perhaps by now only assumed—in the reigning literary and intellectual circles of America, just as anti-Semitism used to be required—and after a while only assumed—in the '20's.

But the Judaization of American culture goes on at levels far beneath the literary and the intellectual. The favorite wine in Missoula, Montana, which does not have a dozen Jewish families, is, naturally, Mogen David; and for years now, "Nebbishes" have stared out of the windows of the local Gift Shop, from greeting cards, ash trays, beer mugs and pen stands. And why not? Everyone everywhere digs Jules Feiffer and Mort Sahl; just as everyone tells "sick" jokes and sends "hate cards" to celebrate birthdays and weddings and national holidays. The "sick joke" and the "hate card," however, represent the entry into our popular culture not only of certain formerly exclusive properties of the avant-garde (the mockery of bourgeois pieties, a touch of psychoanalysis), but also of Jewish humor at its most desperate. There is nothing entirely unprecedented in a vogue of Jewish humor, of course; Potash and Perlmutter were best-sellers in the opening years of this century, and Charlie Chaplin's debut was almost contemporaneous with theirs. As a matter of fact, the Jew enters Ameri-

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can culture on the stage laughing.

It might be possible, indeed, to make a graph showing decade by decade the point at which it became possible for Jews:

1) *to act out travesties of themselves on the stage;*
2) *to act out travesties of other "comical" ethnic groups (Chico Marx as an Italian, Al Jolson in blackface);*
3) *to write popular songs and patriotic subpoetry, and begin the wholesale entry into universities as students;*
4) *to produce comic strips and popular novels;*
5) *to argue cases in court and judge them from the bench; to prescribe for the common cold and analyze the neurotic;*
6) *to write prose fiction and anti-academic criticism;*
7) *to teach in the Universities and help determine official taste in the arts;*
8) *to write serious poetry, refuse to go to college, and write on the walls, "Down with the Jews!"*

Presently, all of these things are possible at once, for no new gain has cancelled out another; and the area of our successes expands at dazzling speed. Huckleberry Finn becomes Augie March; Daisy Miller turns into Marjorie Morningstar (and Marjorie in turn into Natalie Wood); Eddie Fisher is drafted as the symbol of Clean Young American Love, while Danny Kaye continues to play the blue-eyed Jester; and finally we enter an age of strange conversions to Judaism (Marilyn Monroe, and Elizabeth Taylor, and Sammy Davis, Jr.), and symbolic marriages. Eros itself turns, or seems to for a little while, Jewish; as the mythical erotic dream-girls of us all yearn for Jewish intellectuals and learn to make matzo-balls.

EVEN MORE STARTLINGLY, the literature of busy males, of politicians and executives seeking at once relaxation and the reinforcement of their fantasies, is Judaized, too. The long dominance of the Western and the Detective story is challenged by that largely Jewish product, science fiction. There are a score of Jewish authors among the most widely read writers in that popular genre, as compared with practically none in the two older types of institutionalized fantasy. The basic myths of science fiction reflect the urban outlook, the social consciousness, the utopian concern of the modern secularized Jew. The traditional Jewish Waiting-for-the-Messiah becomes in lay terms the *commitment to the future*, which is the motive force of current science fiction. The notion of the Jewish cowboy is utterly ridiculous; of a Jewish detective, Scotland Yard variety or tough private eye, nearly as anomalous; but to think of the scientist as a Jew is almost tautological.

Much science fiction, set just before or after the Great Atomic War, embodies the kind of guilty conscience peculiar to such scientist-intellectuals (typically Jewish) as Robert Oppenheimer; while the figure of Einstein presides over the New Heaven and New Earth which that literature postulates, replacing an earlier Hebrew God who is dead. Even in its particulars, the universe of science fiction is Jewish; the wise old tailor, the absurd but sympathetic *yiddishe mamme*, plus a dozen other Jewish stereotypes whizz unchanged across its space and time. Even secret Jewish jokes are made for the cognoscenti: the police on a corrupt, trans-galactic planet are called in the exotic tongue of that only half-imaginary world *Ganavim*. And in the Superman comic books (the lowbrow equivalent of science fiction), the same aspirations and anxieties are projected in the improbable disguise of the Secret Savior, who may look like a *goy* but who is invented by Jews. The biceps are the biceps of Esau, but the dialogue is the dialogue of Jacob.

Even for those who read neither books nor comics, Jewish culture lies in wait—not only in the gift-shop and the saloon, but in what is our only truly living museum, the real cultural storehouse of the average man: the Supermarket. There—even in the remotest hamlets—beside the headcheese, the sliced ham, the pseudo-hot dogs composed of flour and sawdust, one finds kosher salami; beside the hardtack, ryecrisp and löfsa, matzos; beside the chocolate-covered ants, fried grasshoppers and anchovy hearts, Mother's Gefilte Fish. But whatever is in the Supermarket, like whatever is in *Life* (both organized on the same

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pseudo-catholic principle: everything glossily packaged and presented without emphasis and distinction) is in the Great Democratic Heart of America. In that heart, at least, Jewish culture as defined by gefilte fish and Natalie Wood, the Jewish scientist and the nebbish, has established itself as if it meant to stay. And it is in the light of this cultural fact that Jewish American writers must assess the mounting sales of their books, and the warm reviews which greet them; but the confrontation leaves the best of them amused, the second best embarrassed, and the worst atrociously pleased.

Yet this kind of success is, in a way, what the Jewish American writer has all along desired—though for a long time he was able to depend on the realities of his situation, the exclusion from which he began, to protect him against his own lust for belonging. From the start, the Jewish American writer has desired not only to create images of his people viable in the imagination of all Americans, and to redeem them from psychic exploitation at the hands of anti-semitic gentile authors; but also by creating such images and achieving such a redemption, to become himself part of the American scene, a citizen among citizens, one more author on a list which begins with Benjamin Franklin and Washington Irving. The very notion of a Jewish American literature represents a dream of assimilation; and the process it envisages is bound to move toward a triumph (in terms of personal success) which is also a defeat (in terms of meaningful Jewish survival). If in 1963, Jewish American writers seem engaged in writing not the high tragedy of Jewish persistence in the midst of persecution, but the comedy of Jewish dissolution in the midst of prosperity, this is because they tell the truth about a world which neither they nor their forerunners can consider themselves guiltless of desiring.

Yet at first the striving of the American Jewish community, through its artists, to become a fact of the imagination as well as of the census seemed merely gallant and happily foredoomed. In the beginning, the Jewish author and the Jewish character, whether invented by Gentile or Jew, played only a slight and peripheral role in the literature of the United States, and in the deep mind of the American people which that literature at once reflects and makes. This is in part the result of the simple sociological fact that Jews were in the earliest years of our nation few and insignificant; and that, therefore, the mythology of the Jew, which we inherited along with the English language and the corpus of English literature moved the popular American mind scarcely at all.

It is those whom the White Anglo-Saxon American persecuted in the act of becoming Americans, even as the Europeans persecuted the Jews in the act of becoming Christians, who live in the American psyche as Shylock and the Wandering Jew live in the European one: the Indian and the Negro, who are facts of the American imagination from the moment that imagination is made. The Anglo-Saxon immigrant could maintain only a theoretical anti-Semitism in the New World, just as he could maintain only a theoretical opposition to the aristocracy; his real struggles were elsewhere, and his attempts to project his own psychological difficulties on to the enemies of his ancestors never took root in literature. So with later generations of immigrants, from other parts of Europe; the Germans, the Poles, the Czechs may have brought with them certain traditional anti-semitic fantasies of their native lands; but at the moment that their assimilation to America moved from the social to the psychie level (and in the country of the Melting Pot this moment comes quite soon) they began to find their old nightmares driven out by new ones.

THE JEW COULD NOT FIGURE as the Archetypal Other, the psychic whipping boy in a society which was not bound to him by ancient and terrible guilts: guilts lived as well as read about in schoolroom or even sacred books. Exclusions from jobs and country clubs is no substitute for *pogroms* and massacres; and even the anti-Semitism implicit in Christianity has remained in America largely theoretical, too. An occasional schoolchild has been sent running home in tears with the cry of his classmates, "You killed our Christ!" ringing in his bewildered head; but nobody in the United States *has ever died from it!* And this is perhaps why in our classic literature,

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much concerned with precisely those conflicts from which men had indeed died, the Jewish character plays so unimportant a role.

It is worth remembering, in this regard, that poet who wrote and rewrote, from just past the middle of the last century almost to the beginning of ours, the four-hundred-page poem which declares itself the most broadly inclusive of all all-American poems, includes no Jewish character or scene in his mythic world. There are no Jews in *Leaves of Grass;* and the single appearance of the adjective "semitic" recorded in the concordances to that work turns out to be an error. Meaning to describe the ideal American poet as "plunging his seminal muscle" into the "merits and demerits" of his country, Whitman miswrote the first time around "semitic muscle," but changed it when some amused reader called it to his attention. White, red and black make up his symbolic America, and even the yellow oriental makes an occasional appearance; but the Jew was represented by no color on his archetypal palette, and constitutes no part of the myth of our lives which he has left us.

There are, to be sure, occasional Jewish characters in Melville, and in Hawthorne, Henry James, even Longfellow; but, by and large, these are either borrowed bugaboos, male and female, or inventions of a sentimentality which kept itself pure by keeping its Jews imaginary. In Melville's long narrative poem *Clarel*, for instance, one finds the major attempt to adapt for American uses the archetypal story which has most appealed to the American imagination when it has sought at all to deal with things Jewish: the myth of Shylock and Jessica, the sinister Jew deprived of his lovely daughter. But the American imagination does not permit the gentile hero to get the Jewish girl in a blithe Shakespearian ending; on this side of the ocean, a tragic blight falls over the European myth of assimilation: the dream of rescuing the desirable elements in the Judaic tradition (maternal tenderness and exotic charm: the figure of Mary) from the unsympathetic elements (patriarchal rigor and harsh legalism: the figure of the High Priest and Father Abraham with a knife).

The trouble is that the Jewish girl is thought of not in terms of Mary but of Lilith, becomes one with all those Dark Ladies (otherwise Latin) who are paired off against the Fair Anglo-Saxon Girl: the former representing all that the Puritan mind most longs for and fears in passion, the latter standing for a passionless, sexless love. At the very beginnings of our literature, Charles Brockden Brown could permit his hero to marry a Jewish woman; but neither Melville nor Hawthorne could forget his own pale Anglo-Saxon bride long enough to follow Brown's example. Even in our presumably post-Puritan times, the protagonist of *Two for the Seesaw* finally abandons his Gitel Mosca, Jewish embodiment of impulse and sexual generosity, to return like a good American to the Gentile wife he left behind.

With these half-felt stereotypes, the Jewish writer engaged in the latter half of the nineteenth century; and his responses seem as unreal, as far from the center of American psychic life as those stereotypes themselves. Up to the end of the last century (and in a certain sense that century did not end for us until the conclusion of World War I), Jewish American literature, the stories and poems written out of their own experience by those willing to call themselves Jews, or descended immediately from those so willing, remains not only theoretical but parochial. In this regard, it is like all the subliterature which we customarily call "regional," writing intended to represent the values and interests of a group which feels itself penalized, even threatened by the disregard of the larger community. From one side, such writing constitutes a literature of self-congratulation and reassurance, intended to be consumed by an in-group which knows it is abused and suspects that it is hardly noticed by those who abuse it; and from another, it aims at becoming a literature of public relations, intended to "sell" that in-group to certain outsiders, who, it is assumed, will respond favorably only to "positive," i.e., innocuous and therefore, untrue, images of the excluded group.

REGIONAL WRITING ceases to be sub-literary, however, not when those it portrays are made to seem respectable, but when they are presented as representative (in all their particularity) of the larger community: the nation, an alliance of na-

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tions, all of mankind. But this only begins to happen when regional writers stop being apologists and become critics: abandon falsification and sentimentality in favor of treating not the special virtues of the group from which they come, whether those virtues be real or fancied, but the weaknesses it shares with all men. Such writers seem often to their fellows, their very friends and parents, traitors—not only for the harsh things which they are led to say about those fellows, friends and parents in the pursuit of truth; but also because their desire for universality of theme and appeal leads them to begin tearing down from within the walls of a cultural ghetto, which, it turns out, has meant security as well as exclusion to the community that nurtured them.

The breakthrough to psychic freedom, and to the cultural assimilation which is its concomitant, requires, then, a series of revolutionary acts at a critical point in the history of a minority group; but that critical point is determined not by the revolutionary writers alone. It is no more mere matter of a certain number of heroic individual decisions than it is of the simple growth in size and prestige and power of the mythically non-existent community. The mass immigrations of Eastern European Jews to the United States was over by 1910; and some decades before that, a novelist who called himself Sidney Luska had attempted single-handed to transform various aspects of immigrant life in New York, which he had observed at first hand, into mythically viable material for all Americans. Even the names of his novels, however, (*As It Was Written*, *The Yoke of the Thorah*, etc.) are by now forgotten; for he had begun by imposing on the facts as he knew them a vision of the Jew as the infinitely sensitive artist and the herald of the future, compounded out of George Eliot's portrait of herself as a young Jew in *Daniel Deronda* and the dreams of the Ethical Culturists of his time. He was, moreover, not even really a Jew, only a disaffected White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, who had affected what he took to be a "Jewish" beard as well as a "Jewish" name; and who, when he came up against the limitations of actual living Jews, returned to his own name, Henry Harland; and ended as an expatriate, an editor of the *Yellow Book* and the author of a fashionably Catholic, anti-semitic best-seller called *The Cardinal's Snuffbox*. It is the proper comic-pathetic catastrophe proper to one guilty of the sin known in Jewish lore as "hastening the End."

The creation of Jewish characters able to live in the American imagination cannot be the work of Jewish writers, real or imaginary, alone. As the Jewish writer goes out in search of his mythical self, he is bound to encounter the Gentile writer on a complementary quest to come to terms with him, the stranger in the Gentile's land. As collaborators or rivals, wittingly or not, Jewish author and Gentile must engage in a common enterprise if either is to succeed. The presence of talented Jewish writers concerned with Jewish life, and of a rich and complex Jewish life itself are essential pre-conditions of the Jewish Breakthrough into the deep psyche of Gentile America; but there is a necessary third precondition, too. At the moment of such a breakthrough, the Jew must *already* have become capable of projecting psychological meanings with which the non-Jewish community is vitally concerned; must already have come to represent in his mode of existence, symbolically at least, either a life lived and aspired to by those others—or at least (and more probably) one passionately rejected and secretly regretted by those others. But this is the job of non-Jewish writers; and for this reason we must look to such writers rather than to the Jewish writers of the period to understand just how the Jewish character became mythically viable during and just after World War I.

II.

THERE ARE, TO BE SURE, Jewish writers of one degree of talent or another who not only published during this period, but were in certain cases widely read. In fiction, for instance, there were the mass-entertainers Fannie Hurst and Edna Ferber, middlebrow wits like Dorothy Parker; and even quite serious novelists like Ben Hecht (before his removal to Hollywood) and Ludwig Lewisohn (before his surrender to Zionist apologetics). And in poetry, the nineteenth century poetesses from good Sephardic families, chief of whom was Emma Lazarus, were giving

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way to high-school teachers with social consciences: Louis Ginsberg, James Oppenheim, Alfred Kreymborg. The minor achievements of such poets were preserved, along with the brittle verse of F.P.A. and Arthur Guiterman, the efforts of certain Village Bohemians of the '20's (e.g., Maxwell Bodenhem), and the verses of Jewish prodigies like Nathalia Crane in the pages of Louis Untermeyer's earlier anthologies. In a time when poetry tended to become more and more what was read in classrooms, certain Jewish journalists and educators were making the standard classroom anthologies. But though Jewish American writers to some extent thus controlled American taste, they did not—in verse anymore than in prose—make even images of their own lives that possessed the American mind. In any case, the writers anthologized by Untermeyer and others had little consciousness of themselves as Jews; were engaged, in fact, in assimilating themselves to general American culture by pledging allegiance to social or cultural ideals larger than their Jewishness, whether Bohemianism or Socialism or Humanism in its broadest sense.

No, the compelling images of Jews were made by writers who were not merely Gentiles but anti-Semites, interested in resisting this assimilationist impulse, and keeping the Jews Jews. It is important, to understand, however, the precise nature of their anti-Semitism. Quite different from working-class or populist economic anti-Semitism, that "Black Socialism" of the American factory hand or poor farmer which identifies the Jews with Wall Street and the International Bankers, theirs was the cultural anti-Semitism of the educated bourgeois seeking status through a career in the arts. And it was, therefore, aimed not at expelling the moneychangers from the Temple, but at distinguishing the Jewish exploiters of culture from its genuine Gentile makers, at separating the pseudo-artists (naturally, Jews) from the true ones (of course, Gentiles). It is inevitably produced when certain provincial Gentile Americans moving toward the Big City (Theodore Dreiser, for instance, and Sherwood Anderson) discover that the Jews have beat them to the artists' quarters of Chicago and New Orleans and New York; and it is exacerbated when still other provincial Gentile Americans attempting expatriation (Pound and Eliot, Hemingway and Fitzgerald and E. E. Cummings) find similar Jews even on the Left Bank—in the heart of what they had always dreamed as very Heaven. What the expatriates discovered in fact when they arrived at the Paris of their dreams is most vividly sketched not in a book by any one of them, but rather in one about all of them, Wyndham Lewis's *Paleface:* "Glance into the Dôme, any one . . . who happens to be in Paris. You would think you were in a League of Nations beset by a zionist delegation, in a movie studio, in Moscow, Broadway, or even Zion itself, *anywhere* but in the mythical watertight America . . ."

And when in the 'thirties expatriation becomes too expensive and too little fashionable, when the small-town boy seeks once more the large American City instead of Paris, he finds waiting for him again antisemitic nightmares made flesh: Thomas Wolfe, for instance, reacting with hatred and fear and a lust of which he is ashamed to the young Jewesses at New York University, forerunners of later Jewish coeds, who, in a short generation, would be writing (under Jewish advisors) theses about the very anti-Semites of the decades before. Even Jewish writers of the 'thirties were more likely than not to produce hostile travesties of their own people, especially if—like Mike Gold, for instance, whose *Jews Without Money* was the first "proletarian novel" of the period—their Messiah was a Marxian rather than a Jewish one. The anti-Semitism so deeply implanted in Russian Communism during the Stalin regime was reflected in the American Party, largely Jewish as it was, and in the literature which followed its line. Indeed, the presence of such an attitude was taken as evidence that American Jewish Communists were emancipated from parochialism and chauvinism. In Mike Gold, at any rate, only the *yiddishe mamme,* the long-suffering maternal figure, comes off well; the Rabbi, the landlord, the pawnbroker are treated as egregious villains—and Gold's portraits of them disconcertingly resemble both those of European Jew-baiters like Julius Streicher, and native American provincials like Thomas Wolfe.

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There are ironies involved here disturbing to both sides; for the anti-Semite learns eventually that he has mythicized the Jew intending merely to excoriate him. And the offended Jew realizes after a while that before the Jewish character could seem to author and reader in the United States an image of the essential American self, he had first to seem the essential American enemy. Nonetheless, it is depressing for the Jewish American to think how many of our most eminent and central writers in the decades during which we entered fully into world literature produced anti-Semitic caricatures not from mere habit or tradition, but out of conviction and passion. What a Black Anthology lives in his head: out of Cummings ("and pity the fool who cright/ god help me it aint no ews/ eye like the steak all ried/ but eye certainly hate the juse."); and Eliot ("And the jew squats on the window sill, the owner,/ Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,/ Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London."); and Pound ("the yidd is a stimulant, and the goyim are cattle/ in gt/ proportion and go to saleable slaughter/ with the maximum of docility . . ."); and Hemingway ("No, listen, Jake. Brett's gone off with men. But they weren't ever Jews, and they didn't come and hang about afterward."); and Fitzgerald ("A small, flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half-darkness . . . 'I see you're looking at my cuff buttons.' I hadn't been looking at them, but I did now . . . 'Finest specimens of human molars,' he informed me."); and Mike Gold ("The landlord wore a black alpaca coat in the pawnshop, and a skull cap. He crouched on a stool behind the counter. One saw only his scaly yellow face and bulging eyes; he was like an anxious spider."); and Thomas Wolfe (". . . Jews and Jewesses, all laughing, shouting, screaming, thick with their hot and sweaty body-smells, their strong female odors of rut and crotch and armpit and cheap perfume . . .").

How hard it is after Hitler for any man of good will, Gentile or Jew, to confess that the two most vivid and enduring portraits of Jews created in the period are not works of love and comprehension but the products of malice and paranoia: Robert Cohn of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and the multiformed Jewish usurer of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. Yet though Hemingway and Pound are both, as we have seen, motivated by a similar rage; and though both moved through the salons of Paris just after World War I, learning, as it were, their anti-Semitism in the same school, their ideologies must be sharply distinguished. For writers like Pound and Eliot, it is European Culture, particularly of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which represents the essential meaning of life when it is more than mere "birth, copulation and death." And to them the Jew, excluded from that Culture in the days of its making, is the supreme Enemy; for as merchant tourist and usurious millionaire, he desires to appropriate what he never made, to buy and squat in the monuments of High Christian Culture, fouling them by his mere presence. He is, therefore, felt and portrayed not only as opposite to the Artist but also to the Aristocrat, who (mythically at least) sustained the artist in his days of greatest glory.

To writers like Hemingway, on the other hand, to the devotees of Raw Experience, who went to Europe to fish rather than to pray—though also, of course, to make books, the Jew stands for the pseudo-artist. Along with the homosexual, he seems to them to travesty and falsify their own real role; to help create in the public eye an image, from which they find it hard to dissociate themselves, of the effete intellectual, the over-articulate, pseudo-civilized fake. For them, too, the Jew represents the opposite of the Negro, Indian, Peasant, Bullfighter, or any of the other versions of the Noble Savage with whom such writers, whether at home or abroad, sought to identify themselves. When either a Cult of the Primitive or a Genteel Tradition is in the ascendancy, the Jew is likely to be regarded as the Adversary; for mythically he is the antitype of Negro and Indian, a projection of the feared intelligence rather than distrusted impulse, and "genteel" equals Gentile in the language of the psyche. Neither Paleface nor redskin, neither gentleman or genital man, to

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what can the Jew appeal in the American imagination, which seems to oscillate helplessly between these two poles? Is he doomed to remain merely the absolute un-American, everybody's outsider?

This seems an unanswerable question at first; but it answers itself with the passage of time, and in the very terms in which it is posed. When Americans have grown tired of the neo-Gentility, the selective ancestor worship and high-churchly piety of Eliot; and when they are equally sick of white self-hatred and the adulation of blood sports and ignorance; but especially when they are sick and tired of the oscillation between the two, they can find in the Jewish writer and the world he imagines a way out. Through their Jewish writers, Americans after the Second World War were able to establish a new kind of link with Europe in place of the old Paleface connection: a link not with the Europe of decaying castles and the Archbishop of Canterbury, nor with that of the Provençal poets and Dante and John Donne, nor with that of the French *symbolistes* and the deadly polite *Action Française*—for these are all Christian Europes; but with the post-Christian Europe of Marx and Freud, which is to say, of secularized Judaism, as well as the Europe of surrealism and existentialism, Kafka, neo-Chasidism—a Europe which at once abhors and yearns for the vacuum left by the death of its Christian God.

And through the same intermediaries, Gentile Americans discover the possibility of a new kind of vulgarity unlike the old Redskin variety, which depended upon naivete and simplicity in writer and audience alike. The special Jewish vulgarity exemplified with greater or lesser skill from Ben Hecht through Mike Gold and Nathanael West to Norman Mailer and Philip Roth, is not merely sophisticated, but compatible with high complexity and even metaphysical transcendence. The Semite, someone once said, thinking primarily of the Arabs, but it will do for the Jews, too—stands in dung up to his eyes, but his brow touches the heavens. And where else is there to stand in a world buried beneath the privileged excretions of the mass media; and where else to aspire to touch in a society whose dreams of earthly paradises have all come to nothing?

Moreover, the Jewish American mind, conditioned by two thousand years of history, provides other Americans with ways of escaping the trap of vacillation between Isolationism and Expatriation, Chauvinism and national self-hatred. Jewish American writers are by and large neither expatriates nor "boosters"; and they do not create in their protagonists images of the expatriate or the "booster." More typically, they produce moderately cynical accounts of in-patriation, the flight (as in Bernard Malamud's *A New Life*) from the quasi-European metropolis to the provincial small town. But even this flight, is portrayed in their books as doomed to failure. All flights, the Jewish experience teaches, are from one exile to another; and this Americans have always really known, though they have sometimes attempted to deny it. Fleeing exclusion in the Old World, the immigrant discovers loneliness in New; fleeing the communal loneliness of seaboard settlements, he discovers the more ultimate isolation of the frontier. It is the dream of exile as freedom which has made America; but it is the experience of exile as terror that has forged the self-consciousness of Americans.

Yet it is the Jew who has best been able to recast this old American wisdom (that home itself is exile, that it is the nature of man to feel himself everywhere alienated) in terms viable for twentieth century Americans, which is to say, for dwellers in cities. The urban American, looking about him at the anonymous agglomeration of comfort-producing machines that constitute his home, knows that exile is what one endures, not seeks; and he is willing to believe the Jewish writer who tells him this. That the Jewish writer be his spokesman in this regard is natural enough; he is the metropolitan at home, though expert in the indignities rather than the amenities of urban life.

And he chooses characteristically, therefore, to work in neither the traditional tragic nor the traditional comic mode; for he feels both modes to be aristocratic, i.e., pre-industrial, pre-mass culture genres, reflecting the impulse of a reigning class to glorify its own suffering and to laugh at the suffering of others, postulated as inferior

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to them; which is to say, to treat only its own suffering as *really* real. The Jew, however, functions in his deepest imagination (influenced, of course, by the Gentile culture to which he aspires) as his own other, his own inferior; and he must consequently laugh at himself—glorify himself, if at all, *by* laughing at himself. This is the famous Jewish humor, rooted in a humility too humble to think of its self-abasement as religious, and a modesty too modest to think of its encounter with pain as really real. But this is also the source of a third literary genre, neither tragedy nor comedy, though, like both, based on the perception of human absurdity: a genre for whose flourishing in recent American literature certain Jewish American writers are largely responsible—though with thanks to Mark Twain as well as Sholem Aleichem.

We have similarly witnessed over the last thirty years or so the recasting in terms of second-generation American urban life of certain American archetypal heroes, and the re-rendering of their adventures in an American English affected by the rhythms of the Yiddish and shot through with a brand of wit conditioned by the Jewish joke. These great figures out of our deepest imagination whom we had thought essentially American, we now learn are—or at least can be made to seem—characteristically Jewish as well. It is not a matter of cultural kidnapping, but of the discovery of true cultural resemblances. What, for instance, has happened in the middle of the twentieth century to Huckleberry Finn: loneliest of Americans, eternally and by definition uncommitted, too marginal in his existence to afford either conventional virtue or ordinary villainy; excluded by the conditions which shape him from marriage and the family, his ending ambiguously suspended between joy and misery, condemned to the loneliness which he desperately desires? Reimagined by Saul Bellow for the survivors of the thirties, he comes now from Northwest Chicago, works for petty Jewish gangsters, reads Kafka and Marx, goes to live with Leon Trotsky, and is called Augie March. Or re-invented yet again by J. D. Salinger for a younger and more ignorant audience, he comes from the West Side of New York, a world of comfortably assimilated and well-heeled Jews (though his name cagily conceals his own ethnic origin), plays hooky from an expensive Prep school; slips unscathed through a big city world of phonies and crooks, and is called Holden Caulfield.

Meanwhile what has happened to the most typical of all the heroes of American poetry? Conceived so deeply and specifically, expressed so passionately and intensely out of the self of the poet who first invented him: this mock-Epic hero, crying the most pathetic and lovely of American boasts, "I was the man, I suffered, I was there," seemed once doomed to remain forever what he was to begin with—Walt Whitman, who was born of Quaker parents and moved through a world without Jews. But now, improbably reborn, he remembers listening beside his mother to Israel Amter, idol of the Jewish American Communists of the 'thirties, scolds America for what it has done to his Uncle Max, howls his rage at his father's world (the world of Jewish high-school-teacher-poets memorialized by Louis Untermeyer); and when he has symbolically killed it, writes a volume called *Kaddish*, title of the Hebrew prayer for the dead and tenderest of pet-names by which a Jew calls his son. Walt Whitman, that is to say, becomes Allen Ginsberg.

Not only on the highbrow level of Bellow and Ginsberg, however, but on all levels of our literature, archetype and stereotype alike are captured by the Jewish imagination, and refurbished for Gentile consumption. Norman Mailer and Irwin Shaw, for instance, have conspired to teach us that no platoon in the United States Army is complete without its sensitive Jew to suffer the jibes of his fellows and record their exploits; while Herman Wouk has made it clear that the valiant virgin beset by seducers, whom female Anglo-Saxondom once thought of as the pale projection of its own highest aspirations, is really a nice Jewish girl who had misguidedly changed her name. But what Shaw and Wouk teach, the movies and *Time* magazine transmit to the largest audience; and who is to say them nay in a day when all rightminded men love the fact of Israel and detest the memory of Hitler, a world in which Anne Frank looks down from the hoardings on us all,

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our latest secular Saint.

And there is no end. Only within the past year or two, for example, there has been a major attempt, in the screenplay for *The Misfits* written by Arthur Miller, to adapt the classical American Western to new times and new uses. It is not merely a matter of making the Western "adult," as certain middlebrow manipulators of the form like to boast of their efforts on T.V., but of turning upside down the myth embodied in such standard versions of our archetypal plot as *The Virginian* and *High Noon*. In both of the latter, a conflict between a man and a woman, representing respectively the chivalric code of the West and the pacificism of Christianity, ends with the capitulation of the woman—and the abandonment of forgiveness in favor of force. In *The Misfits*, however, the woman is no longer the pious and pretty but flat-chested schoolmarm that Gentile Americans know their actual grandmothers to have been, but the big-busted dyed-blonde, life-giving and bursting with animal vitality: all that the Jew dreams the *shiksa* whom his actual grandmothers forbid him as a mate. In Miller's film that archetypal blonde was played by Marilyn Monroe (at that point converted to Judaism and his wife), who—under the circumstances—was bound to triumph over the male Old West: the Gentiles' Saturday matinee dream of violence and death, personified by Clark Gable, tamer of horses and females. What remained for Gable, after so ignominious a defeat, except aptly to die? Only the author lived on; though his marriage, too, was doomed by the very dream out of which he made a movie in its honor.

Generation after overlapping generation, American Jewish writers continue to appear: Bellow and Malamud, Irwin Shaw and Arthur Miller and Karl Shapiro followed by J. D. Salinger and Norman Mailer and Grace Paley; after whom come Philip Roth and Bruce Friedman and Norman Fruchter, etc., etc.; until at last Gore Vidal, himself a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, writes in mock horror (but with an undertone of real bitterness, too) in the pages of the *Partisan Review*, where, indeed, many of these authors first appeared: "Every year there is a short list of the O.K. writers. Today's list consists of two Jews, two Negroes and a safe floating *Goy* of the old American Establishment (often Mr. Wright Morris) . . ."

But it is the whole world, not merely *our* critics, who list year after year the two new Jews, plus the two Negroes and the eternally rediscovered one *goy*. The English boy in the Sixth Form of the Manchester Grammar School digs Norman Mailer; and his opposite number in the classical *liceo* in Milan sees himself as Salinger's *giovane Holden*. At the moment that young Europeans everywhere (even, at last, in England) become Imaginary Americans, the American is becoming an Imaginary Jew. But this is only one half of the total irony we confront; for at the same moment, the Jew whom his Gentile fellow-citizen emulates may himself be in the process of becoming an Imaginary Negro. "Do we have to become Gentile Jews before we can become White Negroes?" an impatient and reasonably hip youngster asked me recently out of a college audience I addressed; and he was only half-joking.

In any case, the Jewish American writer is likely to view with detached amusement (and the younger he is the more likely this is to be the case) the fact that his Jewishness is currently taken as a patent of his Americanism. Quite simply, he does not know in what his Jewishness—so symbolically potent—consists; he is only aware that it is on the point of disappearing. This disappearance he may celebrate or deplore when he is called on to take a stand in the symposia on the subject, which have tended to become staple items in the Jewish press; and, indeed, he is free in this regard, so long as he is willing to suffer criticism and reproach, to plump for persistence or annihilation as his principles or instincts incline. But when he functions as a writer in 1963, when he pledges himself, that is to say, to describe in fictional form the kind of Jew he most probably is, and the kinds of Jews he most probably knows, these *must* be if not Terminal Jews, at least penultimate ones: the fathers or grandfathers of (barring always some horrific or miraculous turn of events) America's last Jews.

Such are the inhabitants of Philip Roth's recreated suburban America: vestigial Jews who find

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the appearance in their midst (as recounted in "Eli the Fanatic") of a chasidic Jew, garbed still and believing still as their ancestors were garbed and believed, quite as disturbing as Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor found the return of Christ; and such, too are the inhabitants of J. D. Salinger's New York West Side, those parents and friends of Holden Caulfield, whose Jewishness has faded and paled until it could be proved against them in no court. But the portrait of the Terminal Jew *in extremis* has recently been drawn in the title character of Bruce Friedman's wicked and veracious little novel, *Stern;* a man whose Jewishness has lost all ideological content, positive or negative, and survives only as a psychological disease (strong enough to create an ulcer and motivate a breakdown) kept alive by an equally vestigial and almost equally impotent anti-Semitism.

MOREOVER, THE JEWISH WRITER begins to be influenced by the responsibilities he feels implicit in the recognition accorded him. He has, it is borne in on him, an unsuspected *noblesse* which begins to *oblige* him. If, indeed, the particular experiences into which he happens to have been born have come to seem to Gentiles archetypal; if it is he who must "forge the conscience" of his nation in his time—he must attempt to become worthy of the role (he is likely to think) by guarding himself against the parochial and eliminating from his books all merely local and chauvinistic concerns.

Like the Negro, the homosexual, the Southern author who has left the literature of protest and apology behind, he starts to feel uneasy about eternally projecting characters who are images of himself and his people: Jews, Jews, Jews, Jews! He is not, of course, in the situation of those early Jewish (or Negro or Homosexual or Southern writers) who wanted only to *pass*, to mingle unnoticed in the world of northern, white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. He wants to be, that is to say, not a Jewish writer who is less than Jewish, but one who is more than Jewish. And the devices open to him are many, ranging from the quite simple (and patently false) to the quite devious (and complexly true). He can like Arthur Miller, for instance, and Paddy Chayefsky create crypto-Jewish characters; characters who are in habit, speech and condition of life typically Jewish American; but who are presented as something else—general American say, as in *Death of a Salesman,* or Italo-American, as in *Marty*. Such pseudo-universalizing represents, however, a loss of artistic faith, a failure to remember that the inhabitants, for instance, of Dante's Hell or Joyce's Dublin are more universal precisely as they are more Florentine or Irish; and the works influenced by it lose authenticity and strength.

Or he can, like Herman Wouk in *The Caine Mutiny*, reverse the stereotypes of popular art: set in opposition a hyper-articulate intellectual, who ought to be a Jew but is disguised as a *goy*, and a hard-bitten fighting man, dedicated to the Armed forces and loving authority, who ought to be a *goy* but is given a Jewish name and face. This kind of stereotype-inversion, however, merely substitutes falsification for falsification, sentimentality for sentimentality; even when, as in Leon Uris's *Exodus* the Jewish military heroes are presented as Jews already become or in the process of becoming Israelis. The work of both Wouk and Uris represents, in fact, a disguised form of assimilationism: the attempt of certain Jews to be accepted by the bourgeois, philistine Gentile community on the grounds that though they are not indeed Christian they are even *more* bourgeois and philistine; so that one is not surprised to find Uris appearing in court in the role of *all-rightnik* and enemy of literature, to cry out that Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* "goes beyond every bound of morality I've ever known in my life—everything I've been taught. And I'm not ashamed to say I have morals."

On a more serious level, it is possible to create characters who are specifically half-Jewish, like Salinger's Glass family, those witnesses against the general corruption of a society who appear in story after story in the *New Yorker* and seem always on the verge of becoming the actors in a full-fledged novel, which, alas, never materializes. That the Glasses are Irish as well as Jewish is especially attractive to a public, the older members of which have been conditioned by *Abie's Irish Rose* on the stage and the Cohens and the Kelleys in the movies; but Salinger seems bent on

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making more of the popular contrast than its early commercial exploiters ever dreamed was in it. In a similar way, I have attempted to pass beyond the philistine uses of stereotype inversion, as practised by Herman Wouk, ironically reversing in my *The Second Stone* the traditional roles of accepted Gentile and excluded Jew—in order to raise the disturbing question: who in this time of semi-required philo-semitism is the *real* Jew, the truly alienated man?

It is possible, too, to experiment as Bernard Malamud has in *A New Life* with writing a book about Jewish experience that scarcely mentions the word Jew; presenting a character Jewish in name and background, but not identifying him as a Jew until the book's final pages, and then only indirectly. Even more daring, and finally, I think, more successful is Malamud's attempt in *The Assistant* to create a Jewish Gentile in Frankie Alpine: a man who moves from a position of vague hostility to the Jews, through exclusion and suffering, to the point where he is ready to accept circumcision—to become *de jure* what he is already *de facto*, one of the ultimately insulted and injured, i.e., a Jew. It is one of the oddest and (from the vantage point of 1789) one of the most unforeseen Happy Endings in a literature of strange Happy Endings; and it could only have happened in 1957, at the high point of the movement we have been examining.

Already though it begins to look a little-old-fashioned, this solution of Malamud's appearing as it does in a book which seems a belated novel of the 'thirties, a last expression of the apocalyptic fears and messianic hopes of those terrible but relative simple times. Certainly, *The Assistant* is a book which reminds us of ancestors rather than suggesting to us progeny, like, say, certain works of Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer; a book, for all its desperation not quite desperate enough to be more in tune with the post-apocalyptic fears and metamessianic hopes of our bland but immensely complex times. Nowhere in Malamud's pages, for instance, do we find allusions to either Zen Buddhism of the psychology of Wilhelm Reich; and this is an important clue. For not only in Bellow and Mailer, but in Paul Goodman and Isaac Rosenfeld and Allen Ginsberg and Karl Shapiro there is felt the influence of Reich, one-time brilliant exponent of Freudian insights, and later independent *magus* and healer, who taught that through full genitality man could conquer the ills of the flesh and the corruption of society; and who died—convicted for quackery under the Pure Food and Drug Act—in jail, an ambiguous martyr. A flirtation with Zen and especially a commitment to Reichianism, however, often indicates a deeper awareness of the contradictions in the situation of the Jewish American writer than that possessed by Roth or Malamud or Salinger (who has played with Zen but avoided Reich), much less Uris and Wouk.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH merely to know that at the moment that serious Jewish writing comes to play a central part in American life, the larger Jewish Community is being assimilated to certain American values which are inimical to everything for which that serious writing stands; pledging allegiance to belongingness and banality and sociability, while condemning alienation and intellectual concern and dissent. One must also be aware (as perhaps even a belated 'forties writer like Philip Roth is not sufficiently aware) that the opposition to belongingness and banality and sociability has been itself kidnapped by suburbia. Anti-conformism has become a comfortable slogan of the well-to-do middle-aged with B.A. degrees; and intellectual concern itself has been transformed into academic diligence: standard equipment for teaching jobs at the colleges to which more and more young Jewish people go to sit at the feet of professors more and more often Jewish, too: not City College any longer—but Amherst or Princeton or Vassar.

Similarly the radicalism of the thirties has with the passage of time become a polite, accepted leftism—in whose name certain well-meaning Jews, along with their Gentile opposite numbers, twice worked hopelessly to elect Adlai Stevenson President of the United States; and then accepted, with a sigh, John F. Kennedy. Meanwhile the Great Sexual Revolution of the twenties has turned into a vaguely Freudianized broadmindedness toward masturbation in the very young and casual copulation in the somewhat older; and

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the search for sources of cultural strength in Eugropen *avant-garde* has become the frantic quest for prestige in the pursuit of the *chic*.

To some contemporary Jewish writers, therefore, the effort simultaneously to exploit a vestigial Jewishness (never quite understood) and to satirize the American Jewish Establishment (pitifully easy to understand) seems itself an outworn convention, conformism once-removed. Such writers are driven, in their attempt to preserve what seems to them the essential Jewish tradition of dissent, to attack the academy in which the second-degree philistinism of the sub-Freudian pseudo-left especially flourishes. Their heroes are likely to be boys running away from school, perpetually "on the road"; and revolt for them tends to be defined as high-level (involving Prep School at least, and preferably the University) playing hookey. Such an attack on school and professors inevitably becomes, however, an attack on the kind of literature and criticism which such schools and professors foster, and then an attack on literature and criticism themselves—finally an onslaught against and a rejection of intelligence: the very quality for which, in the deepest American imagination, the Jew has traditionally stood. Imagine living in an age when, with whatever reservations and ironies, an American Jewish novelist has founded a magazine called *The Noble Savage* and an American Jewish poet has collected certain of his essays under the title of *In Defense of Ignorance!*

Astonishingly, the literary and cultural ideals of many younger Jewish writers (and these by no means the worst among us) appear no longer to be conceived primarily in terms of the European *avant-garde*, but rather to be modeled after the examples of certain nativist hyper-American authors of the immediate or remote past. To be sure, no American, not even a Jew in pursuit of a Utopian Americanism, can escape European culture completely; after all, Reich himself was a European before becoming an American; and shreds and scraps of Existentialism play an important role in the works of the writers in question. But it is Walt Whitman who most deeply possesses the imagination of such writers, along with Henry Miller and William Carlos Williams; and from them is derived the dream of a literature unbuttoned, untidy, intuitive and passionate. Indeed, there are some Jewish American authors (most notably Karl Shapiro) who have tried to argue that in Judaism itself are to be found grounds for a revolt against the academic, formalistic and genteel; that our ancestral tradition has been all along more Whitmanian than Eliotic.

At any rate, certain Jews now stand in the forefront of the newest American revulsion from Europe and the life of the intelligence which Europe mythically represents to the popular imagination in the United States. Under the aegis of such publishers as Grove Press, and in such magazines as *Big Table* and the *Evergreen Review*, the Jewish offspring of twenties' schoolmasters and thirties' Communists have oddly banded together with Gentile ex-athletes and junkies to make the movement called "Beat" and to define for that movement a program of rediscovering America and the great audience via marijuana and jazz, more and better orgasms, and a general loosening of literary form. Some of the bright young Jews currently producing first novels and early poems are "beat" or "hip," as their parents were once Stalinists or Trotskyites, only in their larval stage; with maturity (i.e., marriage or a Graduate Fellowship) they are likely to shave off their beards and settle down to doctoral dissertations or new publishing ventures. And some of the older writers who have climbed on the bandwagon in search of a second youth may have been driven less by their conviction even that youth is an absolute good, to be repeated as often as possible, than by a sense of flagging powers, sexual or creative; and they may not preserve their new-found allegiances past the next turn of fashion. But the new Jewish anti-intellectualism cannot be wholly explained away by an analysis of its psycho-genesis; the works produced in its name will survive the allegiances behind them, and the critic must deal with them in their own terms.

In their own terms, they are marked by the abandonment of the Jewish character as a sufficient embodiment of the Jewish author's aspirations and values; and by the invention beside him or in his place of characters who are not merely

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non-Jewish, but are, in fact, hyper-*goyim*, super-Gentiles of truly mythic proportions, specifically, sexual heroes, of incredible potency. Such characters represent a resolve on the part of certain Jewish writers both to invent (reversing the traditional roles) mythical Gentiles for the first time, and to re-invent themselves. One might have expected that the American Jew would have ended by re-inventing himself as the Negro, for the Negro is his archetypal opposite, representative of the impulsive life even as the Jew is the symbol of the intellectual; and the Negro is everywhere in these times at the center of our concern.

AT ANY RATE, while the general American reader, Gentile and Jew, is still eager to identify himself with the mythical Jew established in the literature of the 'forties and the 'fifties: the alienated, intellectual, uneasily at home only in the world of culture—Norman Mailer and Saul Bellow, who began by producing such literature, have moved on to imagine themselves as mythical Gentiles: paleface Protestant Noble Savages, great muscular conquerors of women and jungles, aging athletes—who to the parents of those writers would still have represented the absolute Other. Where, then, has he come from, this Anglo-Saxon hero-monster with which certain hitherto dutiful Jewish American boys insist on confusing themselves? Appropriately enough, out of the ambivalence stirred in the minds of these writers by the public image of Ernest Hemingway: inventor—out of antisemitic malice—of the first notable Jewish character in American fiction. Committed to Hemingway in so far as they are Americans of a generation that learned its speech and its life-style from his books; but cut off from him in so far as they are Jews and, therefore (to Hemingway) embodiments, like Robert Cohn, of the fake artist, the fake lover, the fake outsider—never really "one of us"—they have constructed in irony and desperate love portraits of the elder novelist at the moment of his artistic defeat and just before his death.

Norman Mailer's Sergius O'Shaughnessy is portrayed in "The Time of Her Time" as giving bull-fight lessons in a loft in Greenwich Village: a bull-fighter without real bulls, though surrounded by real enough women, whom he actually possesses in the place of imaginary conflict. It all amounts to a strange yet somehow tender travesty of the images of eros and death, and of Hemingway himself as connoisseur in both areas, which run through *The Sun Also Rises* and *Death in the Afternoon*. In Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*, the same author is evoked by a hulking giant of a protagonist whose initials are E. H., and who seeks in the heart of Africa, in an encounter with savages and wild beasts, the answers to questions he is not articulate enough to formulate; and for all its mannered irony and outright burlesque, Bellow's book, too, seems—especially now—a memoir and a tribute. But Hemingway, as we have noticed earlier, could never tell the difference between himself and Gary Cooper, who came to play so many of the roles projected by Hemingway out of his own anguish and vanity; while Gary Cooper is finally an up-dated Natty Bumppo, perhaps the last Natty we can afford. And Natty was to begin with, of course, the American Indian in whiteface.

Norman Mailer has placed the question of the genesis of the mythical *goy* at the center of his most recent work, commenting on it editorially and including it inside his fictional framework as well. Originally, he tells us, for instance, the two Sergius short stories preserved in *Advertisements for Myself* and the one Sergius novel were to be part of a larger, immensely ambitious scheme: a study of how an inadequate Jew, baffled sexually and artistically, invents in his troubled sleep the synthetic *Ubermensch*, Sergius O'Shaughnessy. "I woke up in the morning," Mailer writes in *Advertisements for Myself*, "with the plan for a prologue and an eight-part novel in my mind, the prologue to be the day of a small, frustrated man, a minor artist manqué. The eight novels were to be eight stages of his dream later that night, and the books would revolve around the adventures of a mythical hero, Sergius O'Shaughnessy . . ." The "artist manqué" is not identified in these notes as a Jew; but we are not surprised to discover reading the novella into which Mailer's "prologue" turned that his name is Sam Slabovda and that he is given to making statements beginning, "You see, boychick . . ."

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MAILER'S SCHEME has fallen apart in his hands, as his view of the world and himself has fragmented perilously; and surely one of his basic problems has been a temptation to believe that, after all, he himself is the *goy* Shaughnessy rather than the small Jew, Slabovda, who has dreamed him in defeat and distress. Hemingway had the same difficulty in keeping himself, brown-eyed poet and laureate of impotence, distinct from the *Amerikanski* heroes of his later work; yet in Hemingway no ethnic-mythic gulf separated him from his Gentile protagonists. And he was never driven, even in his moment of acutest anxiety, to imagine a mating, brutal as an evisceration, between his passive self and its more active projection. Such a mating, however, constitutes both the action and theme of Mailer's most successful piece of fiction, the short story, "The Time of Her Time." At once a confession of terrifying candor and a parable of our times, "The Time of Her Time" imagines an encounter between Shaughnessy and a Jewish co-ed from N.Y.U., whom we might well take for his *anima*-figure; did we not know that she in fact represents the Jewish author, and Shaughnessy the *animus* of his passive fantasies. No wonder the "heroine" is possessed completely and at last not as a woman may be but as a man must, through what Mailer calls "love's first hole."

The blow by blow description of the sexual combat between her and Shaughnessy threatens momentarily to turn into an allegory of the cultural plight we have been examining; but it is saved by the vigor of Mailer's language and the acuteness of his senses—especially of his nose. At any rate, we are not surprised to discover, on either the literal or symbolic level, that it is rape which Mailer's co-ed demands before she will pay any man the tribute of her orgasm; though we may not have been as prepared to understand just what sort of rape she had all along required as is Mailer's Shaughnessy. And why not, since Sam Slabovda who is Mailer who is Denise invented him? ". . . and then she was about to hang again," Mailer makes his protagonist say, "and I said into her ear, "You dirty little Jew.' That whipped her over . . ." And whipped Mailer over with her; for precisely here, I think, *he* made it, too for the first time in his life, made it artistically as his heroine made it sexually; and has been more or less peacefully writing *midrashim* on Buber's retelling of *chasdic* tales ever since.

What is finally clear in Mailer as well as in Bellow, though clearer in the former, is that the other half of Henderson-Shaughnessy, the non-Hemingway half, is the *pogromchik*, the Cossack rapist of the erotic nightmares of the great-grandmothers of living American Jews; and that the great-grandchildren respond to him precisely as their archetypal female ancestor in the not-very-funny old Jewish joke, who whispers over the shoulder of her assaulter to the child indignantly screaming and attempting to tug him away: "*Shah*, Rosalie, a *pogrom* is a *pogrom*." Adapted to the needs of 1963, however, it seems funny enough: a joke both very American and very Jewish this time around; not merely one more but perhaps the greatest as well as the latest Jewish American joke. Yet there is one more; for the Jew who thinks he is an American, yet feels in his deepest heart an immitigible difference from the Gentile American who thinks he is a Jew, need only go abroad to realize that in the eyes of non-Americans that difference does not exist at all.

"*Americans go home!*" the angry crowds cry before our embassies; and hearing them, the Jewish American knows not only that he is quite as American as his Gentile fellow-tourist; but also that his fellow-tourist and he, that *all* Americans, are the Jews of the second half of the Twentieth Century: refused (outside of their own country at least) any identity except the general one contained in a name which is an abusive epithet. "*Americans go home!*" the crowds roar again, while the rocks fly, the police-lines buckle; and running for cover, he keeps imagining that he hears behind him (as running from the schoolyard once he heard the cry, "You killed our Christ!") the shout, "You killed our Julius and Ethel Rosenberg!" "Your Rosenbergs," he wants to yell back, "*your* Rosenbergs?" as once he had wanted to holler, "*Your* Christ?" And remembering the childhood indignity in the midst of adult ones, remembering when it was as difficult being a Jew as it has become to be an American, he finds himself laughing too hard to be dismayed.

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ARNOLD NEWMAN

Arthur A. Cohen

THE JEW, SECULARITY AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE

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IT IS NOT CONGENIAL to the sentiment of liberal men to contemplate the renaissance of religious culture in our time. The liberal temper, encompassing as it does more than the disposition of politics and power, is informed by attitudes and influences reflective of the transformation of Western manners, morality, and habits of thought which followed the decline of baroque culture in the seventeenth century and the beginning of the age of secular enlightenment, trans-confessional internationalism and the rule of autonomous reason in the early eighteenth. The religious intellect abdicated, religious art declined, theology and philosophy evaporated as objective orders of knowledge, and, what is more urgent, the focus of myriad small communities of disciplined believers and wonderers shifted from the contemplation and service of God into the pursuit of present, diffuse and immanent social ends—wealth, position, natural virtue and complaisance, harmless and perverse sensuality, political power, indeed, all of these self-subsisting dominions of authority which continue to govern the man of today.

There are no longer unitary and cohesive cultures, spanning nations and languages, however much there may be vortices and constellations of concern which in time may generate general culture once more (general culture meaning here those cultures that depend upon the consciousness and force of a transcendent perfection toward which men move, from which men learn, and by which men are agitated to nobility and excellence). The goals of powerful cultures—and there are powerful cultures in this world (however much we may regard them as defective and incomplete)—are partialities, extrusions of historical exigencies, constructs of the exterior man projected and advocated as though they were indeed the whole man and the entirety of his destiny. So we may regard the Marxist-Leninist vision, so we may regard the aggressive capitalism of the industrialized West, so we may regard self-arrogating democracies, whose totalitarian claims are no less totalitarian for being beneficent. But such a judgment upon the familiar ideologies of the present age rests upon an assumption: if man is no longer that creature who wonders about his origins, his destiny, and his death (that is, if man is no longer contemplatively historical as were the Prophets, Jonah, Job, Ben Sira, the rabbinic homilists of Exodus or Lamentations or as were Eusebius, Lactantius, St. Augustine, or Pascal, but is rather the enjoyer of a spurious, disordered, transitory historical life) then it is proper to regard the cultures of the day as presumptive, not real; indeed, as ideologies with the garb of culture; not as culture in any recognizable traditional form, but culture construed as an embellishment and adornment of naked power. Culture is as man elects to create and believe it—and if man is no longer before the thunder and manna of God (a continuous dispensation, I believe), but limited to an anarchic, evanescent presentness unto finality, then there can be no religious culture of significance and perduration.

Christian culture existed once; it exists no longer. Jewish culture existed once; it exists no longer. Buddhist culture existed once, as did Confucian, as did Muslim; they exist no longer. The gifts of this world have become too vast and attainable to persuade men, by the discipline and deferment of expectation, to await the gifts of grace for which one works diligently and quietly and without the publicity of the world's appreciation. Such cultures did once exist—architects, painters, sculptors, scholars, and mystics, worked anonymously, known only to their friends, their patrons, and their community; but unknown to the world except through the glory of their works and the remembrance of God. They were nourished by tradition, succored by holy conversation, renewed by retreats, prayers and meditation, inspirited by the knowledge that the pleasure of their works was incommensurate to its rewards and independent of its posterity; and strengthened in the now-lost wisdom that time mattered little, for a thousand years were yet and still as yesterday in the perspective of eternity.

It is insufficient to bemoan the passage of religious culture—the wearisome complaints of Christians (and most vocative complainers in the West on this count are Christians) who hawk the death of both the West and Christianity, are very often in the unhappy predicament of not understanding

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or caring to understand what has really taken place in the modern world. The complaint is less to move the world forward than to regain the time past, less to roll back the darkness of cruelty, poverty, dispossession and war than to recall earlier dispensations which were able to rationalize and beatify them as consequences of Adam's fall, the human condition, the unredemption of man and history. But, thanks to many auspices, such a pacific acceptance of the human condition no longer obtains. From Vico and Condorcet to Camus and Sartre, the image of sanctified progress and the accommodation to absurdity and inauthenticity have made all the achievements and defects of our humanity ours alone both for good and for evil.

IT COULD NOT BE HOPED that what has preceded will persuade my Christian readers that the present age of secularism—that massive desacralization of existence which we have all encouraged and of which we are all the issue—is the reasonable consequence of our freedom, the diffusion of power, the presence of egregious social and economic deprivation, and the emergence of compensating ideologies. You will be, as I am often, tempted to put aside the modern temper as but a willful and punishable excess against the magnificent past. But we would be wrong. It may best be demonstrated that we would be wrong if I array before you the multitudes of my own past which illustrate the decline of religious culture and exemplify the qualities which give me, if not the surety, at least the hope, that it may be reborn one day.

The Jew was, with the Greek, the creator of the West—of Western Christianity and, not a little less, of Islam. We were that isolate, uncontaminate, obstinate and unyielding people whom God, in a moment of superb and excellent capriciousness elected to be his own—much against our protest and conniving as well as with our agreement and joy. In that ancient world, surrounded by a superfluity of gods and the influences of many cultures and polities, my ancestors fashioned a remarkably comprehensive and embracing culture—a culture which synthesized adversity and apposition, which formed a unity out of contrast, which consolidated worship and literature, poetry and imagination in order that its microcosmic world might authentically reflect the macrocosm of the inhabited world.

The Jew was an historical creature; his culture was formed out of the shards and figurations of history—recalling past and limning future, expostulating against waywardness and desecration, prophesying the issue of bad faith and open trust. Whether or not the scroll of Deuteronomy had been found by the prophetess and recalled to Israel, whether or not Ezra had returned from the Babylonian exile and assembled the people of Israel to hear Torah re-proclaimed, what may be noted in the Bible is that the Israelites were concerned that the vision of a consecrated people, who knows and transmits knowledge, be sustained.

The first age of Jewish religious culture—the Biblical culture which is called by non-Jews, the Old Testament—is that hoary testament which establishes the first self-conscious historical antiquity of all our pasts. The Jews wrote self-conscious history because in that bare land—mythically a land of milk and honey—rock and stubby mount, desert and forest were transformed from nature into the matter of history, nature ceasing in its infinitude to protest against time and submit, as the Psalmist repeatedly stresses, to become the harbinger and witness to historical time. Nature became the metaphor for history; the natural dumb-show of the Greek became the exemplification of life lived and "the heavens," indeed, "declare the glory of God."

This first and primordial age of religious culture informed by a unique and prëemptive divinity is the age of the Bible. It could not be hoped that those Hebrews, few in number and without the talent and nurture for power, would be emboldened in the centuries that precede the rise of Hellenism, to seek the conversion of the world. The Jews believed in their possession of truth (for how else could one imagine their insane struggle even then to endure), but they had the prudence to know that paganism was less an arrogant pretension, than a folly ("For they have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, noses, but they smell not . . ." —folly and untruth, but not until the days of

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Antiochus Epiphanes and Rome, arrogance and blasphemy); moreover they had the realism to judge history not in the light of some imminent end which pressured action and decision, but with the perspective of centuries where all works out slowly, patiently, with the humanly unreasonable deliberateness of a God who will not hurry.

The Jews were concerned that they form themselves in order to endure before the assaults of the world (I regard this sense of history—the deliberate patience of God before the impatience of man—as a crucial factor in the Jewish refusal to accept then or now any penultimate redeemer). The culture which the age of Ezra the Scribe transmitted to the teachers of the first centuries of the common era was an unsettled culture, a living culture which every day encountered its opposition in the Roman settlements of Palestine, the Greek communities of Northern Palestine and Syria, the mixed cultures of the Diaspora already settled by hundreds of thousands of Jews. Each day these people, who lived, prayed, studied, taught, pilgrimaged to the Holy Land, and died in their dispersion, were reminded of the contrast between their way and the bizarre ways of paganism. They were, as classic exponents of anti-Judaism argued, the non-conforming, alien, unassimilable ferment of their world—refusing false allegiances, distinguishing the proper claims of state from the higher claims of revealed truth, denying obeisance where such was an untenable arrogation or blasphemy. These ancient Jews set the pattern for what was to become the Christian disclaimer before Rome. And, it should not be thought that, in their refusal to remove the sacred from the profane, they denied the rightful claim of secular authority. Not in the least. They were well instructed to acknowledge the legitimacy of power rightfully employed—to command obedience to order, the established just law, the economic sustenance of the state by right payment of tithes and taxes, indeed, to the support of the law of the land. But they refused the right of any prince to command the capitulation of the mind or the spirit to the ordering discretion of the state, holding as they did that the state could command only to the extent of its competence, that it could not teach what it was not empowered to know.

THIS ANCIENT WORLD wherein pagan and Jew lived together passed. In its passing the West was inhabited by Christian and Muslim, each commanding a vast suzerainty, each founded upon a revelation that commended the immediacy of submission to saving truth, each in turn anathematizing the other in ignorance of the other's claim, and each finding the Jew, ancient and stubborn dissenter that he was—the test and touchstone of their truth's viability. The Jew amid Islam pitted jurisprudence against jurisprudence, religious polity against religious polity, ancient claim against ancient claim (for Islam the issue of Messiah was not an issue, for the terrestrial redeemer had come in the figure of Muhammed and the recalcitrancy of the Jew was not centered upon his refusal of this prophet's divine person but upon his refusal of the prophet's teaching); with Christian the Jew was recalcitrant against a person—"the one and only" Messiah who had fulfilled, completed, and consummated all for which Israel waited (for the Christian not Judaism, but the unbelieveing Jew was the focus of animus; not the system or the Law, but the irreducible, stubborn person of the Jew was the enemy).

The Jew became the pivot of the West—the recipient and reagent of empowered cultures. The unified culture of the Jew disappeared after many centuries of contained existence. Whatever the kings of the Near East had done to pierce the homogeneity of ancient Israel—taking from its midst ten tribes, cutting off captives and exiles, dispersing its adherents—was nothing compared to what Rome achieved. By the time of Rome, Palestine had begun to enjoy the first fruits of secularity (for secularity is born in societies where a settled order obtains long enough to permit the internal contest of ideologies of economic or political privilege and deprivation to constitute themselves), beginning as it did to rationalize the endurance and transmission of an established order of law and custom. The Jew under Rome was already conscious of possessing a rich and bifurcated tradition—formed and blossomed culture ready to be plucked. The culture which the destruction and gutting of the Holy Land ended, was a culture

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already marked by the extremes of ascetic withdrawal and ecstatic apocalypticism and solid middle class commercial piety, a conservative and a reform party upholding, one the inheritance of the propertied and privileged (whether landowner or priest) and the other the urban middle-class and poor, meticulous piety and inventive spirituality—and each had its supporters, its classes, its conventicles, its sub-culture within the larger culture that sustained all. Intrepidly and bitterly as they fought, Jewish nationalists (who envisaged God as bound to a single land) and Jewish universalists (who conceived God as having elected one, but not excluded any) perished before sheer might. Judaism went into the Exile; and it entered Exile, according to rabbinic tradition, with the sorrow of the Divine Presence who was regarded as mourning with it throughout the duration of the Exile until the advent of the Messiah.

Before Christendom and Islam, Judaism was an enduring vestige. To the Jew, Christianity and Islam were regnant kingdoms of error, whom God, in his majesty and justice, would rebuke. Both judgments were, if anything, premature, for all three—Christendom, Islam, and Judaism, have lived until the present and have come to know that each has suffered, and each has been suborned, and each has failed to sustain its covenant. But surely the role of the Jew in the passing of religious culture has been in all truth secondary and tributary to the larger passing of the religious center. What should be asked of us that we be mighty without numbers, persuasive without privilege, influential without an audience?—for the Jew has been disengaged by the design of power from the lifestream of the West for some eighteen centuries. We did more than could have been asked, for we transmitted ancient wisdom to Europe before it sought it, made available manuscripts, scientific and medical knowledge, philosophic wisdom some centuries before scholasticism had been ripened to diffuse it; we preserved the cultures of the ancient world until that moment, when, through the leniency and connivance of Spanish Islam, Christian scholars could be instructed to return it to Oxford, Paris, Provence, and Italy.

In short, until the world that the French enlightenment and English empiricism and Dutch and German humanism crystallized independently of Church, the Jew had been the politically disinterested mediator and trafficker in knowledge—without gain or profit, without reward or benefice. I imagine the Jew fulfilled this role because it was an international role—a role which was transmitted without particularity and ethnic allegiance; it was, if you will, a universal role in a world already stubbornly particularist. It is here that I feel obliged to part from Christopher Dawson's estimation of the universality of Christian culture or T. S. Eliot's refusal to allow the entrance of the Jew into his "Christian Society"—for such Christian cultures are universal to Christians, rather than to all men. The marker for both Dawson (positively) and Eliot (negatively) is the generality of the consensus and the removal of dissensus.

There can be no question but that the Jew is an incubus of dissensus. Were we all wise and full of faith, we should be grateful for the dissensus of my people and charitable before the vagaries and byways of its present modalities of dissensus.

The Jew is not to be expected to perform as a general culture nor is it, as Max Weber and other social historians casually categorize, a sub-culture or a pariah culture. We are not a general culture other than prospectively—not a general culture, in fact, for we have not textured or refined the basic history and inheritance of the primary social, political, and communal institutions of the West. We cannot, except by deft handling of Scripture, claim for ourselves either the tradition of the rule of reason and law, the humane foundations of toleration and enlightenment, the touchstones of humanism and political justice; at the same time we cannot, in our conservative passion, bespeak ourselves the guardians of an intellectual aristocracy, a hieratic politics, a dominion of authority by honor, respect and wisdom. In fact, we can claim any position to ourselves, because it has been the dialectic spirit of our ancient literature —reflecting as it did then a general and total culture—to be the spokesmen of all views and all doctrines. The capaciousness of the classic Jewish temperament should not be mistaken for eclec-

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ticism: that the rabbinic tradition was free and sacerdotal, liberal and narrow, lenient and harsh, bending to the side of mercy or straining to the limit of justice, was—in all its extremity—the reflection of a culture that embraced all kinds of men, but embraced them in a single embrace, for whatever and however Jews then believed they believed out of a fixity of purpose, to know God the better and to serve him with heart, soul, and passion.

As a culture that formed and united a people into a unique service, it was a whole culture and a religious culture. It recognized no sacred and no profane, regarding the sacred as liable to desecration and the profane open to sanctification. The *saeculum*—that forgotten Latin word paralleled in the rabbinic tradition by the juridic concept of the "public domain"—was the province of the neutral, neither sacral nor condemned. The *saeculum* was the meeting ground of culture, where the exchange and barter of conviction took place, where the rabbis met and conversed with the people, where the homilies and parables of the faith drew their analogies, where, in short, life was lived. The Temple was the arbiter and channel of divine power, the Houses of Study were the *ancillae* of both the *saeculum* and sacerdotal, where truths were formed out of the contact of humanity with revelation, and the Synagogue (before and after the destruction of the Temple) was the extension of study and the divine-human encounter.

Indeed, everything in Judaism was culture—religious culture in its purest and uncorrupted form, for there was no other purpose to culture than to enrich and deepen the mutuality of man and God.

IT IS AN IRONY that Christian and Jew should come to share the passing of their religious cultures as a consequence of that cycle of historical events which detached the Church from secular power and first secularized the Jew. I do not, Christian historians to the contrary, regard this as the age of secularization (secular, taken here as an absolute and countervailing norm to religion). Indeed, speaking as a Jew, a recipient of the bounties of liberalism, I regard the compact of the Church and State, *ecclesia* and civil power, as a much more profund abuse of the religious center than all the devices of a religiously-indifferentist modern state. All that has happened today is that the Church and the Churches are finding themselves increasingly irrelevant, and, as such, are ignored other than to the extent to which they can effectively compete with political power by the use of political power. For many centuries religious men have failed to speak through the Spirit, but have used the available instruments of coercion, pressure and ungloved power to hold together a faltering consensus.

At this moment, perhaps for the first time in more than four centuries, there is the hope that the religious man, removed from the councils of power, obliged to rely only upon the persuasiveness of the spirit and the charisma of example, may once more project an image of a more significant enterprise for human life than the routine and terminal self-indulgences which characterize the present West.

The bondage of the Jew amid Christendom need not be rehearsed. It was a long and unremitting bondage, relieved but little, underscored and emboldened frequently. The culture of the Jews of Spain and Provence, a rich and foliated example of infra-culture, was repressed; the conserving culture of North Europe, that of Rashi and the Tosafists in the 11th Century or of the scholars and pious of Germany before the Crusades disappeared; the great centers of Jewry moved again from West to East, disappearing from England, France, Spain, and Germany, reappearing in Italy and Turkey in the South, and Poland and Western Russia in the North. All the time these communities were harrassed and beset, without other security than wealth or that which influence could purchase (and it could purchase little when communities were already impoverished and depredated); and then, in the wake of the wars of religion in the seventeenth century, an exhausted and debilitated Europe awoke to the nonsense and folly of its fanaticism. For more than a century it had fed on its own bulk, slaughtered its own, destroyed its substance. It could not have been otherwise than that a massive revulsion against narrowness, ignorance, torpidity, inhumanity, and cruelty should gradually alienate men from the intention of religion, and reform persuade him

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that religion was a secondary, marginal social instrumentality.

The secularity of the European enlightenment was the issue of that more dangerous union of Caesar and Constantine which had been Renaissance Christendom—Catholic or Protestant. Could the French enlighteners or the German humanists or the English rationalists have done other than to ridicule and undermine all that masked its manipulations of power and credulity, anti-intellectualism and superstition as truth. The anti-Church behaved with no more charity or tolerance than did its opposition; the Counter-Reformation had been no more palliative and mitigating than had been the Reformation. In the disabusing of Western man of the false power of Christendom, the Jew gradually made his way out of his sectarian culture. The Jew was no longer disqualified merely because of religion—to be sure, he was still by Western Christian standards rude, vulgar, uneducated, ill-mannered, illiterate—hence the peculiar appeal which such a learned Jew as Moses Mendelssohn (died 1786) exercised upon the imagination of educated Europe, becoming, in fact, the example from which Lessing drew his characterization of the tolerant and humane, Nathan the Wise. The educated Jew was a surprise and a delight, because his education was equal to his Westernization, and his Westernization was no less than the turning of his back upon an insulated ghetto culture. The rites of passage whereby the Jew made his way into the West consisted in his de-Judaization. The Jew is secularized (not secular, please note), because the West, the de-Christianized West, made it a condition of his emancipation.

THE JEW, IN SUMMATION, is justly tired of being berated for secularity. It is as though the honorable membership of liberal organizations, civil liberty conservationists, anti-fanatics or sponsors of Engel against Vitale are somehow unilaterally subverting an established, accepted, inherited, and unchallenged cultural unanimity—unanimous, that is, until they began to suggest it wasn't. And since, it is commonplace for many Catholics and many Protestants to imagine that any Jew who speaks English and lacks beard and frockcoat is an atheist secularist, it is well to be reminded of several summarizing consequences of our historical examination:

1. *The Jew, by disposition and history, prefers a society where both principle and freedom is inspirited by the religious center. Jews would have preferred to have shared directly and intimately in the religious nature of Western culture. They were prohibited from doing so by the theological animus of Christendom. They served Christianity nevertheless by being the mediators and transmitters of culture, succeeding in this role only by remaining marginal to the dominant culture and insulated within their own.*

2. *The price of both Jewish marginality and insulation was staggering—the Jew became a myth and as myth he was slain and reborn endlessly, losing however his own real blood along the way.*

3. *When the internal tension of Christendom was resolved in favor of the neutralization of Christian temporal power, the consequence was that the civil and social life of the West was separated in fact from its spiritual foundations. This separation made possible the normalization of the dissenter; it made possible the normalization and acceptance of the Jew.*

4. *The Jew, in joining the West, no longer joined a Christian West, for he did not join a Church wedded to a society. He joined an emancipated West (externally emancipated from unjust secular power and internally emancipated from repressive constrictions of thought and imagination). The Jew joined an already de-Christianizing West, and as part of the bargain he agreed—foolishly—to de-Judaize.*

5. *The mistake of the Jew was that he imagined that the Christian—being French, English, American, Italian, what have you—would be particularist in nationality, but no longer sensitive toward religious difference, having depassed fanaticism for enlightenment. The Jewish mistake was that the very particularity-universality syndrome which makes the Jew both an ethnic (people) and spiritual (universal) phenomenon while being also the citizen of a nation, invited the Christian—however unreligious—to revive and transmit his*

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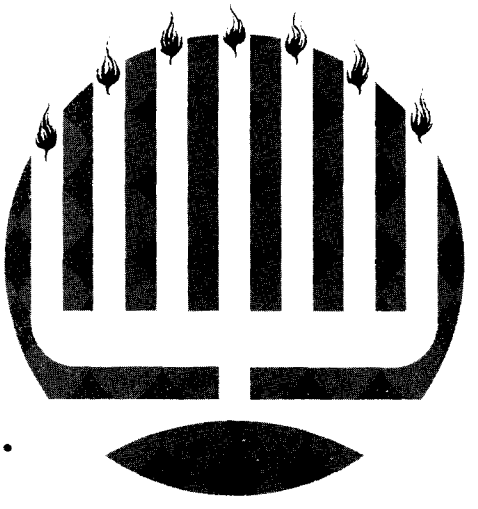
"Christian" anti-Semitism of old in the vestments of secularity—economic, nationalist, social, and racial hatred.

IT IS OUR CONTENTION that Christian culture waned because Christians no longer desired it—that is to say, quite properly, that many Christians (or at least a sufficient number of Christians) have ceased in the present moment to be the Christians of the past. This is not to judge that the Christianity of present day Christians is less desirable, in principle, than the Christianity of earlier days. As a matter of fact, quite the contrary is my belief. There is greater reason for Jews to trust a Christianity which is without other power than the power of works and grace than a Christianity which also enjoyed the coercive support of the State. For myself, as a Jew, I do not wish to a Christian statecraft any more than a totalitarian secularism—I despise both, for Christianity is destroyed by temporal power and the creative *saeculum* is no longer neutral and open when it becomes totalitarian.

The Jewish contribution—as ancient, medieval, and modern Jew (not as mere Jew-by-birth, or Jew-by-pressure, or Jew-by-sentimentality, or Jew-by-guilt-or-resentment)—can only be made when the Jew is the free *viator* of dissent. The dissent of this Jewish self (and I speak for myself, however much I will honorably acknowledge that I believe my own position to have its share of grand truth) can only exist usefully for the benefit of all men and to the glory of God if it is offered to a free culture, however Christian, Buddhist, or Muslim it might be in generality. To the Christian, my Jewish dissent would warn against an assumption that the First Coming of The Christ is the same as if He had Come Again—that society is still unredeemed, that men are still idolaters, that war, dishonor, meanness, and vanity still render the relations of men brutal and cruel. To the Buddhist, my Jewish dissent would be that his Stoic self-centeredness, whatever the wisdom it may yield the dissolving self, is arrogantly solipsistic in its disinterest in sharing that wisdom directly, actively, passionately with those who become too patient or passive before history. To the Muslim, my Jewish dissent would be against a tradition that has come to make faith a political cause at a moment in history, when the insolvency of nationalism is all too evident to others.

And to all cultures, large and small, this minority culture of Jews can do little more nor little less than to continue to speak over and over again those ancient words, "Not by might, not by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4:6)



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THE MAN FROM DAKOTA

David Cornel de Jong

I SAW HIM moseying amid the brown piles of kelp, stooping, straightening, peering away, pushing whatever he was finding in the seaweed into the bulging pockets of his harsh-green jacket. He shivered, then pushed his shoulders straight, and felt at the deep dents of his peaked hat with its wide brim, beneath which his face seemed to be entirely composed of fretting chin and nose. On his feet were those famous American shoes, yellow, very high, with rosettes of red and blue carved into the leather. The heels were as high as those on women's shoes, but run down. I knew all about him: he was the American, the man from Dakota, who had been a thief, and who even now might be dangerous.

I watched him, with my hands deep in my pockets, and all of me so well exposed on top of the dike that everybody in town who wasn't asleep could clearly see me, should the man try to molest me. On the other hand it was early afternoon, and nearly everybody was asleep, especially the women. The men were out in the fields or away in the fishing boats, and of course, every child but me was in school.

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The sea lay like a sheet of aluminum, afflicted by nothing but slow-moving shadows. The gulls had lined themselves up, each separately on a pole of the old pier, their bills barely swiveling. Apart from the gulls, the man from Dakota and I seemed to be there in a great emptiness, a temptingly dangerous emptiness, in which something might yet happen. I wanted him to see me. I wanted to talk to him. I stared severely at the two islands crouched on their heavier shadows. The sky was a solid gray. There were no colors on the seaside of the dike except those of the Dakotan.

I eased down the dike, two or three steps, so many short centimeters, edging toward the man. I was still in sight, from the knees up over the dike's crown; clearly marked as being too sick for school, from which at the moment came a new song for Queen Wilhemina whose birthday came at the end of the month. The song filtered from the school so persistently that it almost made me turn to see if the windows were open to let the song out so much. But I was determined to keep my eyes on the American.

He might be dangerous and I was putting myself to the test. I descended the dike a few more feet, and in a moment I wouldn't be visible to anyone in town, unless Grandfather had already gone up in the tower to oil the works of the old clock. Only the tower and its belfry peered across the dike. On the other hand, ten minutes ago, I had left Grandfather asleep in his chair, with the two stone poodles above him on the mantle, the *Friesche Dagblad* spread over his face, and his clean, scraped out pipe delicately in his hands. "He's good for the afternoon," Grandmother had said to me, heaving herself into the wallbed, pulling the green curtains with the red ball fringes shut, and saying next: "Now, boy, get yourself some health and don't bother us." To get health I went to the top of the dike, where there was apt to be sun and wind and air. There was only air. It was chill air, which made the American hunch his shoulders, and made him look up from time to time, to be forlorn and not hopeful.

OH I KNEW a great deal about the American. But not everything. He had been in town three weeks, and had arrived during my second week in bed. There had been a great deal of talk about him at that time, and also later, when I was up again and about. But there was also talk about the man who exposed himself and yet was such a good Christian. It could be the American, who furthermore was a strange Christian, judging from all the hushed indoor talking, with knitting and tea-drinking, and all the women in the house concerned, who said: "Truly, but what else can you expect from the poor man."

"He stole a silver gulden."

"It was only a half-gulden."

"And he was only a child then."

"And I warn you, there is a child here, too. With ears, and imagination, in spite of his poor kidneys."

"Kidneys have nothing to do with imagination."

"But he is all imagination, Tjis. Besides, wouldn't it be better to forgive the poor American by now?"

"Ah, he was one of ours then, when he stole, one of our town. Though motherless. And now there is that terrible religion upon him too. They say it's very American."

"So then he is American now, and not one of ours."

"We must forgive."

"Above all forget, which is the reverse of forgiving perhaps."

"But staying here with that lying uncle of his, who would not know how to show him the truth. Ah, and all that gold in his mouth. Of which his uncle says everything in Dakota is gold."

"When he stole that silver coin he was only thirteen. And someone was foolish enough to leave it before his eyes."

"His religion is as of a boy of thirteen now, and those high heels, and that stereopticon he shows to all the wrong people."

"I have figured he is thirty-two now, Tjis. And he may be from a land of gold, but not where he himself can reach it. Isn't it so? And then that great coat!"

"It is all fur, bear or bison, and in July he wore it and sweated in it. Until it got to be too ridiculous."

"The boy, he's listening."

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"He's coloring a map. For not being in school. He colors maps to keep up."

"The map of Dakota, Tante Tjis," I said. "There are two Dakotas, but he just talks about one. See." But they hardly glanced at the map, except to say that it made for pretty squares. And did everything in America come in squares or gold?

They didn't talk then about the man who showed The Thing. This man, the Dakotan, might be only dangerous because he had stolen a half gulden. There was something very vague about his danger. I edged closer to him.

By now I had given Grandfather enough time to climb to the tower belfry and oil the works of the clock. The tower looked steadfastly across the dike, and if Grandfather was in it he could see my danger.

THE DAKOTAN kept picking things out of the seaweed. They were egg sacks I saw, dried and black, when he held one up and it was a silhouette against the bleak sea. I was now so close to him that I could see the intricate rosettes carved into his strange shoes, of which he kept the high heels wedged between the basalt blocks so that he wouldn't slide down the steep side of the dike.

He looked up at me, is if I was no more than something just happening, and there was no need of questioning me as to why I wasn't in school with the rest, or whose son I might be, and why did I look so peaked and what ailed me. Those were the questions I expected, because everybody in town knew the answers. They were conversation with a boy.

But he said: "What do you know. Company. Somebody else who's not in bed." And he spoke Dutch, not American.

There was no answering that. He kept a lopsided smile on his face, which put his nose out of kilter, and allowed his two gold teeth to gleam. Yet when addressed by an elder a polite boy had to make some remark. "You have teeth of gold," I said.

"Everything in America is gold. Except the Indians," he answered.

"In Dakota," I assured him. "In North and South Dakota."

He didn't reveal which Dakota, but said: "Everything is gold, even the pisspots. And not just thin gold like the gold helmets of the old women here, but thick like your thumb." He showed me a yellow thumb, with a cracked nail on it.

"Ah," I said, and studied him harder to see how dangerous he was. Now that his mouth was shut and lined up again, it looked as if it had centipede legs over it, by way of small creases, of a paler color. His nose pinched in all by itself and dripped. His eyes were brown-yellow like coffee with old goat's milk floating on it, and from beneath the peaked, pinched-in great hat came tufts of hair which could be any color. I wanted to ask him questions, and when he stooped to pick up another egg pouch I asked: "Why do you want those things?"

"To show in America," he said.

"In Dakota?"

"Yes, except the Indians don't care; they're dumb and don't ever wash. Everything is gold, but nobody's seen the likes of these. Know what they are?" But before I could answer, he said: "They're purses in which Judas put his thirty pieces of gold when he betrayed our dear Jesus. I have to find thirty of them, and I'll show them in our church."

"Where?" I asked, wondering if the church was gold.

"In Dakota, of course. It's a humble church and it doesn't ask for recompense, not always. Only when you can. I am a servant of God." Yet when he said that he looked ashamed and shy, and he turned his face away and peered out at sea, and then swung up a green sleeve and with a finger wagging at the gulls he said: "Look at them sitting there like all the condemned."

"Oh," I said.

"Yes I would, if I hadn't these shoes on, I would walk to the end of the pier. I would look there down into the water where the Leviathan lies in wait. But I'd be sure to stumble, and why should I stumble before I have completed my task?"

"I don't know," I said. "Where is your uncle?"

"Home, sleeping, telling lies in his sleep. Do you know that it is lies that always does it. It did

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to me." He was so emphatic his large silver hat went askew and he clutched at it desperately.

"Why did you come back?" I asked.

"Compensation. The spirit told me. The spirit said return to the scene of your affliction and be cleansed in the waters of Jordan."

"This is the North Sea."

He shrugged, and I remembered there were pictures of Jesus in Gethsemane in his stereopticon. But also Indians and cowboys and three American presidents. I reminded myself also that he surely must be dangerous, and turned to look up at the belfry of the tower. Perhaps I should tell him that I had been sick, and would not go back to school until after the late August vacation. But shouldn't he ask me first?

He had turned. He was treading his way daintily over the blue-black basalt stones toward the edge of the sea. There he relieved himself and shivered, and then said over his shoulder: "If you do this in America, they'd lynch you. String you up that is. It is a very civilized country. But here it isn't even sin."

"In Dakota?" I asked. "In North or South Dakota?"

"Everything in Dakota is gold," he sing-songed.

Gold, but he had stolen a silver half-gulden. I wanted to ask him about silver, now that he had turned, and was climbing up the stones of the dike again toward me. But immediately he stooped again and picked up two more black egg pouches in which Judas had put his thirty pieces of gold. Yet I was sure that the Bible said they were thirty pieces of silver.

He might be dangerous. But I could not see where the danger was. I backed away, up the dike slope, beyond the basalt-block base, into the grass, where the footing was more certain.

"Don't go away," he said.

"I think I have to."

"Don't go away and leave me alone in this Gethsemane," he commanded.

"I must. There's school," I lied, but it wasn't a full lie.

"Ah yes, the Christian School. You don't go to the public school. America is full of Christians too but nobody gives them credit here. Would you some day after school walk with me to the end of the pier and look for the Leviathan?"

"No," I said.

"I shall have to go alone and these heels catch behind the basalt blocks. I'll lie there with broken bones and the weasels shall eat of my flesh and the tide cover me."

"Yes, I think they would," I said and picked up two black egg pouches, and tried to give them to him.

He shook his head. "I must find them myself. The thirty pieces. It is my duty."

I put the egg pouches in my own pocket. "You must throw them away," he said rustily. "You have no use for them."

I stepped on them and they made popping sounds. "I'm going now. I hope you find thirty. I hope you'll take them back to Dakota. North Dakota. South Dakota."

"They're full of gold."

When I was nearly on the crown of the dike, where the whole town could see me, I shouted the question down at him. "And silver?"

"Go home, boy," he shouted. "And pray. Pray that you may learn to forget."

I ran. I kept running down the landside of the dike, down the sheep path, into the arms of Tante Tjis in the middle of the square. "You David, with your bad kidneys you should not run. It is dangerous. Come here and hold my hand."

"But I am nine," I argued.

"Where have you been?"

"On the dike."

"And why are you running so hard?"

"To go home."

"Ah, I see the tower clock is going to be oiled properly again," she said then, and pointedly stared away from the mouth of the street opening on the square and from which that moment Grandfather emerged carrying the keys to the tower and a burnished oilcan.

So I had been truly alone with the Dakotan all the time, and not even Grandfather had been there to watch me from the tower, and to see my nearness to him, and the danger. Still, above all I

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wanted to forget the Dakotan now.

"Don't stand there staring at him," Tante Tjis grumbled. "I have no time to stand here in the middle of the square and let him chatter my head off about this and that and politics and the weather. It is time to walk you home and give you your medicine, but surely we can do so with dignity and without interruption. And still you haven't told me why you were running so hard."

But she had taken my hand and she was guiding me in the direction where home wasn't at all, but firmly away from Grandfather, who after all was not her father, but my mother's, and who could not be tolerated easily when it came to social and civil affairs she had often told me. She creaked determinedly in her stays and grimly pushed a peppermint into my mouth. "It'll keep the gas down if you get any," she said. "All that running, and down that steep dike slope. Who scared you, boy?"

"I wasn't scared, Tante."

"Well you might be. With all that's going on here, and you too weak and alone to fend for yourself. Did you ever stop to consider how we have to worry about you? With Americans all over town, and you not safely in school?" Now however she was hurrying so much on a tangent away from Grandfather, that she had no patience left to listen for my answer. She didn't even have patience left for further questions, and when I asked: "Is the Dakotan still a thief, and if his uncle didn't do all that lying would he be able to live with him, because now they're both wrong, and. . . ." I got so entangled in the complexities of my own question that I came to a stop abruptly.

We had turned a corner now and Grandfather was out of sight. As with relief she said: "You do sound as if you have a fever again. And I wouldn't fix my poor sick mind on that Dakotan if I were you and his lying uncle."

IT WAS VERY EARLY MORNING, three days later, and voices were talking in the other room, as I lay in bed awakening. There were the voices of Tante Tjis who lived in the house because she would never marry anyway, and of Mother and of some of the other tantes who must have come on an early morning visit. But there was no sound of teacups and teaspoons and the chatter was urgent and awed. "Well, as I say they fished him out dead. Dropped or keeled over, or smitten, and all those gulls screaming at it from the end of the pier and he staring up with gravel and seashells in his mouth, washed around those gold teeth he was so proud of as if a mouth full of gold could save him from the calamity. One wonders that he possibly could have stumbled on those terribly clumsy Wild-West boots, so that it was not intentional, but an accident, a tragedy. And perhaps he was being driven, because his was a tortured soul. And that religion he had taken on, wasn't it intended for savages, for Indians? On the other hand, could we call him civilized, and would it be proper or even adequate for us to take his guilt upon ourselves?" The talk twined and intertwined with the morning sounds.

I sat up in bed to listen better. Then I heard that Grandfather was there with the women. He protested: "I told you I saw him from the belfry. I was at the clockwork, and then I heard those gulls and I looked down, and I saw him on that mad old pier, driven he was, and the gulls taunting him."

"Then you could have stopped him," Tante Tjis cried. "The poor man. Driven. But you let him fall."

"Stopped him, stopped him?" Grandfather shouted. "From the belfry of the tower? A grown man walking on the pier? And did I say that I saw him fall? That was on another day. It was not the day he fell."

"You might have warned his uncle."

"That lying man? Who would not recognize the truth? Ah, you ridiculous women and your logic. No I shall leave you, and let you have your own wisdom. I only came to tell you what I heard, how he was found, and before the sick lad awakens and puts his own thoughts and fancies on the deed, because he is too young to understand that this was a cruel history which turned upon itself, and shall now turn upon all of us, because the best we could do was snicker at him. He should not have walked there alone."

"Walked there alone? Should we perhaps have taken his arm and walked there with him arm in

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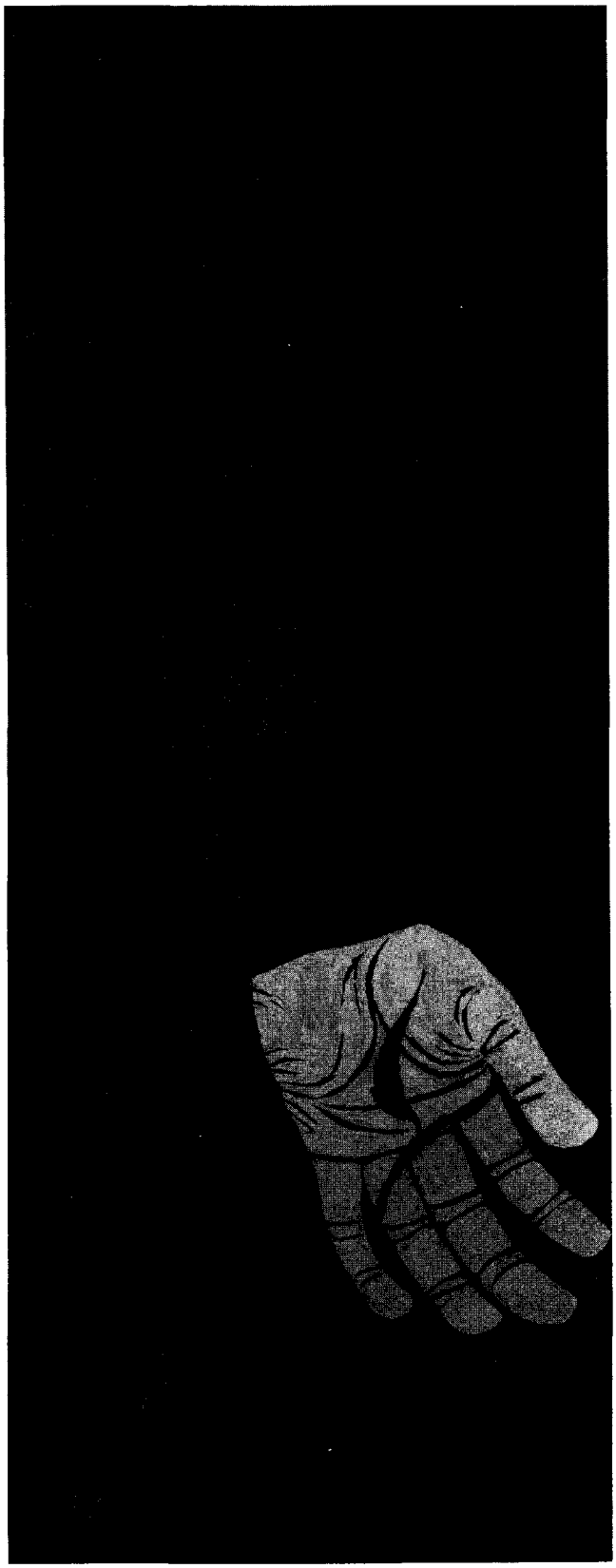

arm? With that mad little man, who might have murdered us? Or worse?" There were several women's voices, tossing up those questions, and Grandfather said, "Ah," and then again "Aah," and then I did not hear his voice again. I heard the streetdoor close, and there came the clatter of wooden shoes on the brick pavement. There was a short and tense silence in the house.

It did not last long. In a little while the women talked about all manner of things, but hardly about the Dakotan. Except then his name slipped in as a lesson, as an example, which had to be applied somewhere, to someone, it seemed far out of the house, or not even belonging to the town. From it, too, emerged the fact that the Dakotan hadn't been at all the man who had committed iniquities and exposed himself. That had been done by a much more respectful townsman, a better man, who was now all the better for having made a confession, though he would have to serve a term and the blot would be on all his family. No, the Dakotan's infamy was something they could barely recognize and could not be expected to understand. Tante Tjis said so plaintively.

They stopped chattering entirely when I joined them in my bedclothes. They all watched me, and their hands stood still above their chores. They did not stop me when I looked for my crayons. They only watched more intently and silently, except that Mother scolded then: "You have not even said good morning to us, David," except, it felt as if she hadn't expected that I would.

I found my crayons. I selected a black one and a purple one. Then I found my coloring atlas, and opened it to the American states. One Dakota I made a deep black, and the other one an almost as deep purple, blotting out all the rivers, the roads, the towns, the mountain ridges and the lakes.

They were all watching me. "Now will you look at that industry so early in the morning," Tante Tjis at last cried.

"What strange colors for maps," Mother said. "They are like old calico. Isn't that silly for maps, David? Even for those square states in America?"

"Gold is the true color," I mumbled, not looking at them. "But I never had a gold crayon."

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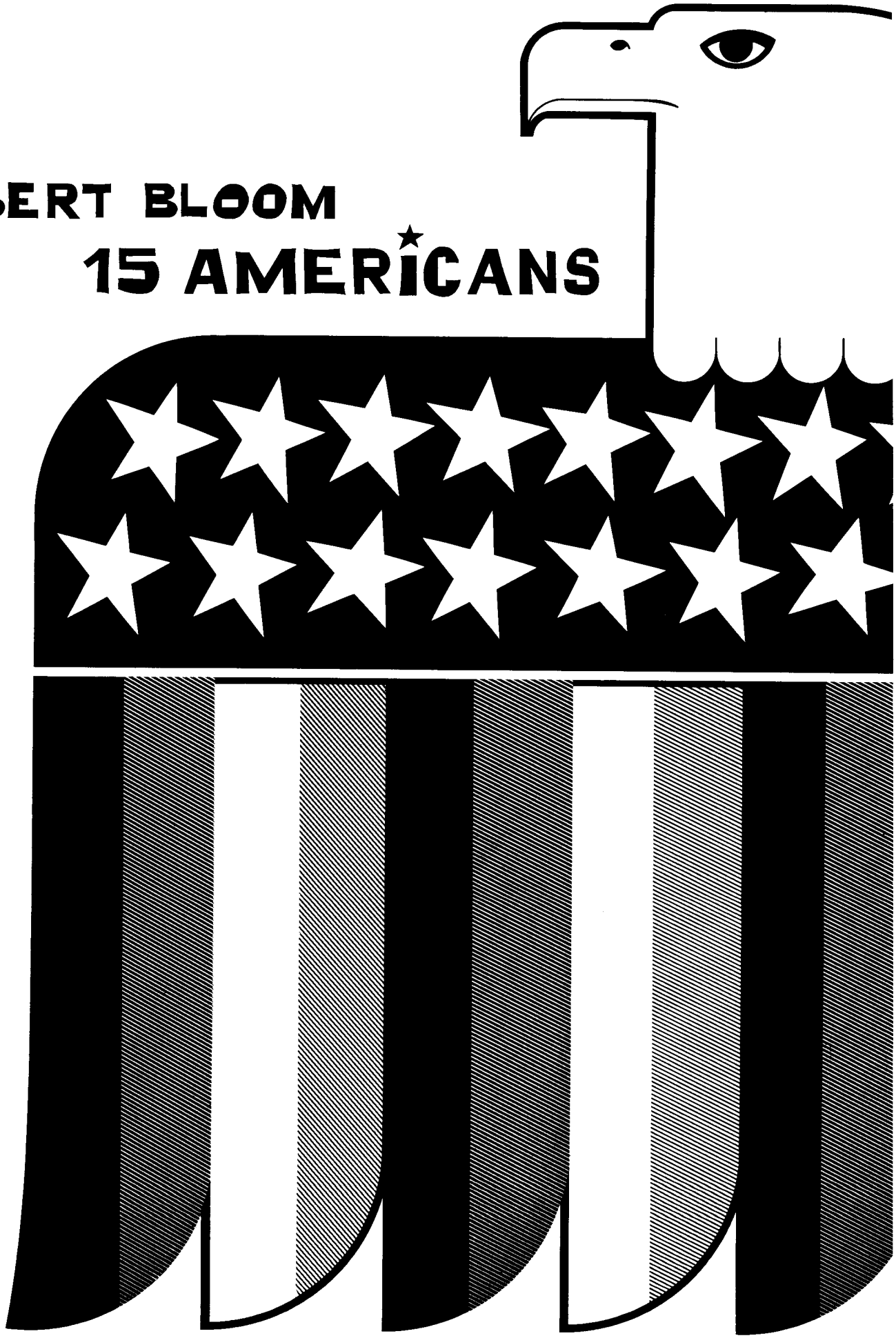
ROBERT BLOOM

15 AMERICANS



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THE ARTIST

I? Max Gregory, 40. How do you do? Born:
Odessa. Travelled: Bucharest, Athens,
Buenos Aires, New York.
Experience: a wife
most of the time, I prefer it, but not the
same one for a life. I paint women, I
study them: men, too.
It's technique,
technique, there's no technique! What I mean:
not Dali, but to paint a face, a portrait,
the woman the way she is.
Like Goya!

Romantic, I know. I am. Max Gregory, round,
anxious, romantic.
I *like* people, you
know. I like to talk to them: boys, girls,
men, women, especially women.
I was four-
teen, you know: my father said: it's okay,
good, here, use this, don't get sick.
I
learned early. Things must begin right—
early, in the cradle, in the mother's
belly!
That early!

THE POLITICIAN

He wore dark lenses, paid two bodyguards,
and fully expected a bullet—cut
a handsome figure, nevertheless, and paralyzed
his public.
He had the dice in that town,
and *could* not drop them; people should know
that of their leaders, or what's a leader
for?
Suave, continental, in a continental
district, he owed them something—say, his
life—in small return for tribute while
he lived it.
Someone had set him up with a bag
of bills, but tricks were old hat.

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Now he was
rarely seen in disreputable company, flattered
the national committee, and sent his
daughters to Vassar and cotillions.
He had
a private plane at the airport and a private
helicopter to take him to it. But his face
was ashen and he passed water twice in the night.

Not even elections could put him right.

THE SURGEON

I like my work.
The scalpel cuts clean
to the core, the rot's excised, and there's
an end.
The barber of Türingen (on my
father's side) had a knack with cupping—
it's all written down. But what did he
do with the blood?
There's a lot of it
here, all cancerous, it can't be used, and
the sweet tricks of nurses throw up.
They have their uses, but not on this table.
Give me an old freak for a plain day
of the week.

I had one case with the marrow gone—
the marrow!
What could I do, stuff her
bones? And then the kin came to: *But
doctor, you didn't tell us!*

What am I? A barber? A witch?
I'm a surgeon. I cut out the rot.

Who knows how it comes?

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THE PROFESSOR

Brilliant at thirty, through at thirty-six,
he had the air of putting servants down,
but democratically played chess with all
and was a proper liberal.
Blond shock
of Iowa corn was his head—inside, the
kernel of something dead. Moot as equal
signs he moved and trusted what was proved.

They all went on: Helen in tight pants and
flats, Dad who sat and stared. Stan had
made good in Hollywood; perhaps Somebody cared.

And Alice who went to Vermont, and married
a renegade teacher; hadn't he loved her once,
that slight pathetic creature? And bought
her books? And made her bed? And left
a photo in her stead?
Had he not once said
No! to all, and struck a blow, and fought
for fun? And the clear, clear thoughts!
And the barricades!
But nothing will leave
us alone.

THE MINISTER

It's a liberal church—we joke among
ourselves that God's moved down the block.

All right. But don't *you* laugh. His ways
are strange, and if He's got to go
a while, don't think He won't be back.

Perhaps He's sorting sheep for me—big,
black ones, with useless wool—I've
hardly any left.
The sleek white lambs
are comfortable, and deadly kind.
I like
infected herds, rams that never suckled,
ewes that moan and frolic in the night.

Something moves in them that gives my God
delight.

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THE DIRECTOR

I had an eye in high school and it got me
here, through picture mags and newsreels.

They were all glad to help me along, those
fellows, knowing they were doing it
for themselves, which is what people are.
I make no bones about it.
The first
was done on loan with volunteers, and liked
alike by family and friends. My wife
had money and the next one got me in: I
have a gift for timing and detail,
also the greatest affection for everyone
in this biz, from scriptwriters up.

At one time I thought I'd stick to man's
plight, the human condition, and ado-
lescent stuff, but spectacle's the meat.

It takes time to learn: one divorce and
thirty birthdays. Next month: Alexander
on the original sites.
Bring your tent.

* * * * * * * * * *

THE ACTOR

I don't mind bad light in the dressing room;
it's right for an old face, and anything
goes on the road.
It's the boxes discourage:
having them up there, those husks, those shells,
tapping the roots, tapping the rain.
I'm
no fountain for fish, not at sixty, and never
was. It's time to get something back—
especially for Lear,
an empty old man,
but I have no daughters, and how does one rage
in a void?
Well, it wasn't the money, I'm
glad to say. How wasted they are who've got it!
There's juice here! If it has to dry,
I like it like this.
And didn't they take
from me always?

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THE TEACHER

It's turning thirty into one; the way they
come to me, I can't see they've had
houses,
and everyone must leave the room.
Do you know what this profession is?
Saying *don't*, and trying to say *you do*.

First grade's the worst: they think I'm
mother waiting there to kiss them. Be-
tween that and sixth is in-between of read
a word and stop a fight.
Even recess is
time in for nursing, what with milk that's
got to wean or else.
I'm tired.
What if
schools were playpens? There's just a chance
they'd want to learn.

* * * * * * * * * *

THE NURSERYMAN

I met a man in Sausalito—great, blond
forearms, a face full of frowns.
He was standing by the water, hands on hips,
taking it in—the islands, the bridges,
the harbor.
I thought he was a friendly cop,
or a sculptor, ready to cast San Francisco
in a fistful of clay.

He understood things from the outside in,
and I liked him because I understand
things from the inside out—and for a long
while he talked while I listened, because
that is the way of outside people with inside
people, stopping now and then for me to
fill in the gaps in the way he thought.

His name was Murdoch; he had lived in
Sausalito all his life; nor had he married
in fifty years.
I would like to be as strong
as he was, carry great pots of earth on my
shoulder, plant shoots of lilac and rho-
dodendron, smile carefully once in a very
long while.

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THE PAUPER'S BOY

It's my cousin's brown sweater with buttons.
I have to wear it.
Another thing is long
underwear, and the sleeves shrink.
I may
have a new mother soon, father said. But he
doesn't mean it. Only when the lady comes,
he says that.
When it's just me, he says:
Alice looked nice.

I know where she went.
It was last winter,
and she lay a long time in bed. I couldn't
touch her anywhere; but once, she touched
me, like snow on my face.
Where she grew up,
mother said, the boys went barefoot, and
the sand blew all day, like rain from the sun.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

No patience with portraits and set-ups—
I have to get it the way it is. Not like,
but *it*.
That series on the kid, getting
a new pair of shoes. It missed, but one shot
came off—the old sneaker. I know when
I'm good.
It's no buck, shooting pix. I'm
on gage, and I can't lick that. Spot shots
are spot meals, and not even a rep.
But
the click! There's nothing like it!
I got
that body on the highway with a ten buck lens,
and five grand insured, waiting for takers.
The darkroom's a dungeon.
Give me the instant,
the moment, when everything comes into focus!

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THE REPORTER

I never get to say anything: I mean,
anything worth saying.
It's not
like Broun's day: stand up with a
bottle and shoot off your mouth.
Ever read him? I mean that man said it!

The country's changed. We're tight-lipped:
don't butt in the next guy's racket.
It hurts. I mean: it *hurts!*
Take
gambling: fifty billion and who cuts in?
Uncle? You? Me? Nuts. But try
to say it. *Oh, no, mustn't touch!*
But
any baddy cuts a slice and my job, too!

I'll bet my hunch on papers, though:
they're tops for kitty litter.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

THE SCIENTIST

One of my teachers in high school got
hung up on bell jars—I don't know
when, but long before I knew him—
and fuddled away his motion on anything he found to fit in under.

I have to say I liked the man—presuming, if I must, on adolescent
rights—and doted on the way he dusted
them (the bell jars), as if each mote
blown off would wipe away a failure.

He must have died long since, (as I long
since began to live), but truthfully,
he taught.
I can't forget the simple
repetitions of his hands—I say it
kindly—as if an ape had learned
a shell game.
I'd like to find the stone
he looked for.

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THE DERELICT

On the coast a man stood by his car, shaving.
I don't know what he was doing there,
any more than I was. "Take a ride," he said,
as I came past.
But something in him
stopped me. He had a look of trouble, the kind
that gets the next one into something *he*
can't get out of.
"Thanks, but walking's my
line."
He'd have his talk though. That was
plain.
"Got the time?"
I stopped.
"Just did
thirty days," he said. "In Oregon. They're
mean up there."
"I'll bet."
The shore was
lined with fishing smacks and schooners.
"I'd
like to kill myself," he said. "Swim out past
all this muck. Would you?"
"Kill myself?"
"Stop me." He had a black, beseeching look.
"No. I'm not a justice. If dying's what you
want, perhaps you should."
I didn't wait
for him to seize me. That kind would kill for
nothing but its own despair.
When his moods
come on me, I pack in the past and walk some-
where.

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THE UNDERTAKER

That language had a word for *bull* that took
his chest in—a double bellows, blown
(as like as not) from bowels of blackened air;
emptied with a fearful sigh and leaving
him less buffalo than hide.
Good to his mate,
with young or without, and better to their
brood (who sniffed all kinds of petals),
he got to be the biggest on the block, and
even ran for office.
You could tell why,
if you knew those people. They had a taste
for menace, doffed their hats to property,
and viewed the law with more alarm than flesh
gone back to seed.
He lost the run, though
slander put the tax-collector in to manage
life, and ever after stomped and pawed his
circle with even braver horns.
He had no face
to speak of—pocks and pallor—was easily
hurt by random looks, and loved a wicked
joke.
In the back of his parlor, among the
red-mouthed dead, he put his feet to soak.

ROBERT BLOOM *was born in Newark in 1925. Following service in World War Two, he was graduated from the University of Chicago. He lives at present in New York City. His poems have been published in* Poetry, Prairie Schooner, Chicago Review *and other magazines. His sequence of poems,* FIFTEEN AMERICANS, *received Second Prize in the* RAMPARTS *Poetry Contest.*

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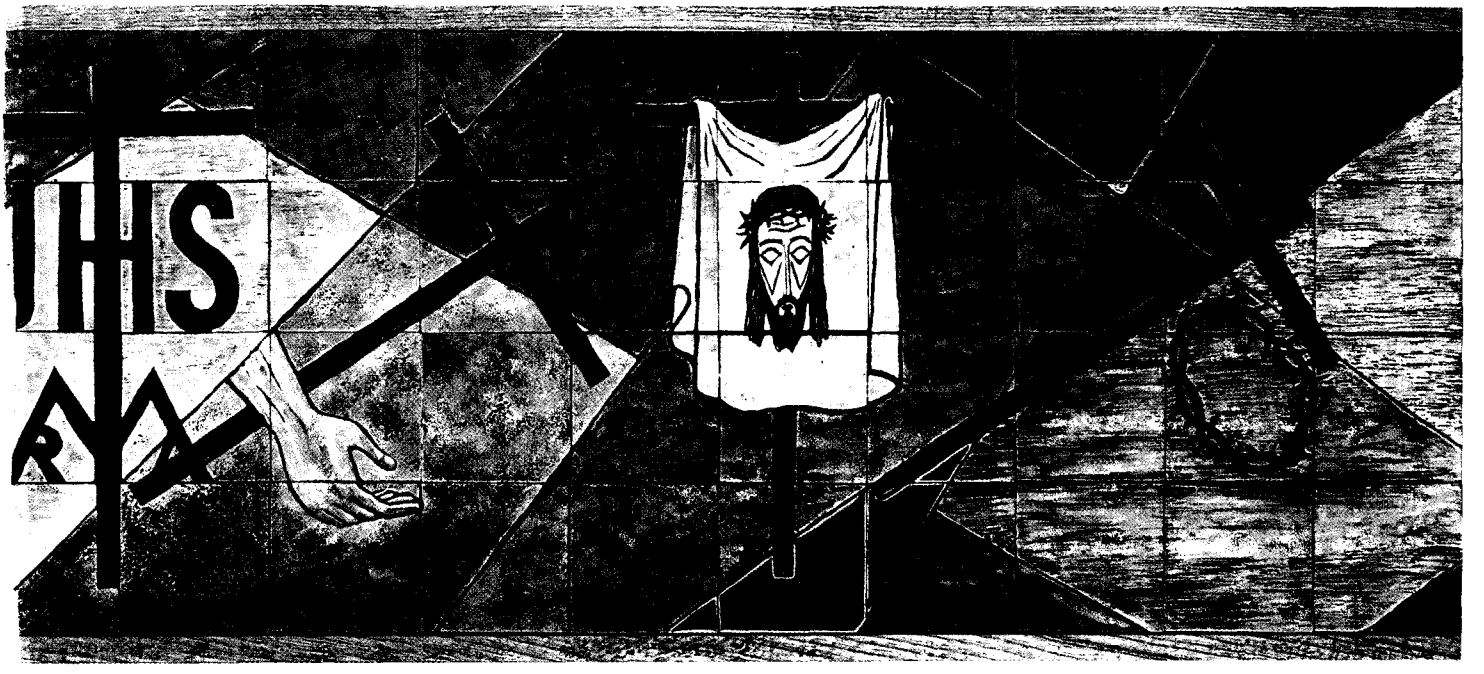

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

by Geza St. Galy

e artist must choose an idiom like that of Christ, Who in
teaching reached the simple fishermen of Galilee as well
the polished Greek and Roman minds.

The history of the Stations of the Cross goes back to the
ly centuries of Christianity, when pious pilgrims went to
usalem and followed Christ's steps from the Praetorium
Mount Golgotha, thereby gaining indulgences. In various
ts of Europe, Calvaries sprang up in the cemeteries hud-
d on hillsides around the village church. They also found
ir way into monastic gardens. They resembled the present
/ Way of the Cross, but did not carry with them the privi-
e of indulgence. Probably Blessed Alvarez, a Dominican at
rdova, was the first to erect a Way of the Cross within a
urch. The Franciscans in Italy adopted the practice around
50, and for a long time they were the only ones permitted
canon law to erect Stations within a church. The Moslem
cupation made pilgrimages to the holy places in Jerusalem
ficult. As a consequence, the Way of the Cross found a
rmanent place in the churches.

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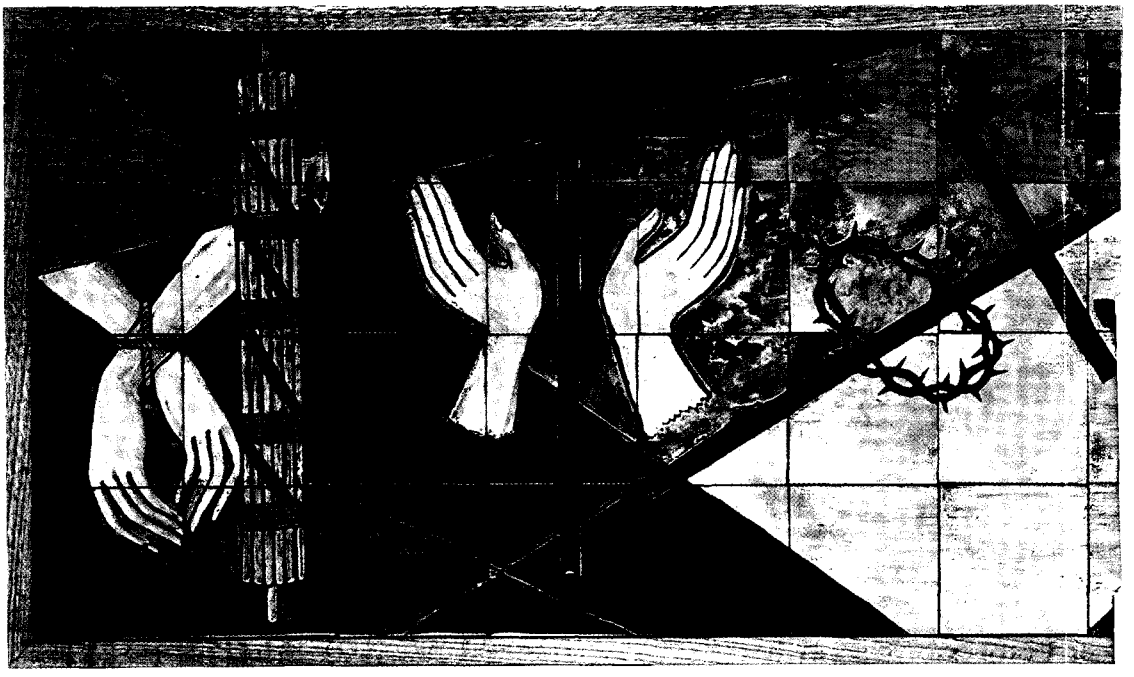

To the Christian artist of today the Stations of the Cross are a challenge, perhaps the greatest one in church iconography. For too long the Stations of the Cross have been slavish copies of prototypes, some good, others bad. The copies invariably lacked spirit and individuality. Instead of telling the final and all-important act in the drama of the Redemption, they became fourteen fragmented panels of a mob-scene. Carved in marble, stone or wood, sometimes cast, they all resembled each other regardless of the artistic material and technique employed. Needless to say, these static images outlived their purpose and do not belong in our churches where the trend is to simple architecture with the emphasis on space, light and function at the expense of decoration. The Stations must cease to be mere pictures hanging on a wall. To keep pace with current church architecture, they must be subordinated to the structure and, while enhancing it, must become an integral part of the building.

The rendering of the Fourteen Stations thus presents a complex artistic problem. The artist must be mindful of the history and tradition of the Stations, as well as the rules of religious iconography. When breaking a tradition, he must remain historically correct and at the same time have a good reason for the intended change. He must remember also the two-fold purpose of church iconography: to teach and to serve as a source of meditation. In his **Ballade pour prier Nostre Dame** François Villon makes his mother call the holy images the Bible of the poor and unschooled:

Femme je suis povrette et ancienne,
Qui riens ne sçay ; oncques lettre ne lus.
Au moustier voy dont suis paroissienne,
Paradis paint, ou sont harpes et lus,
Et ung enfer ou dampnez sont boullus:

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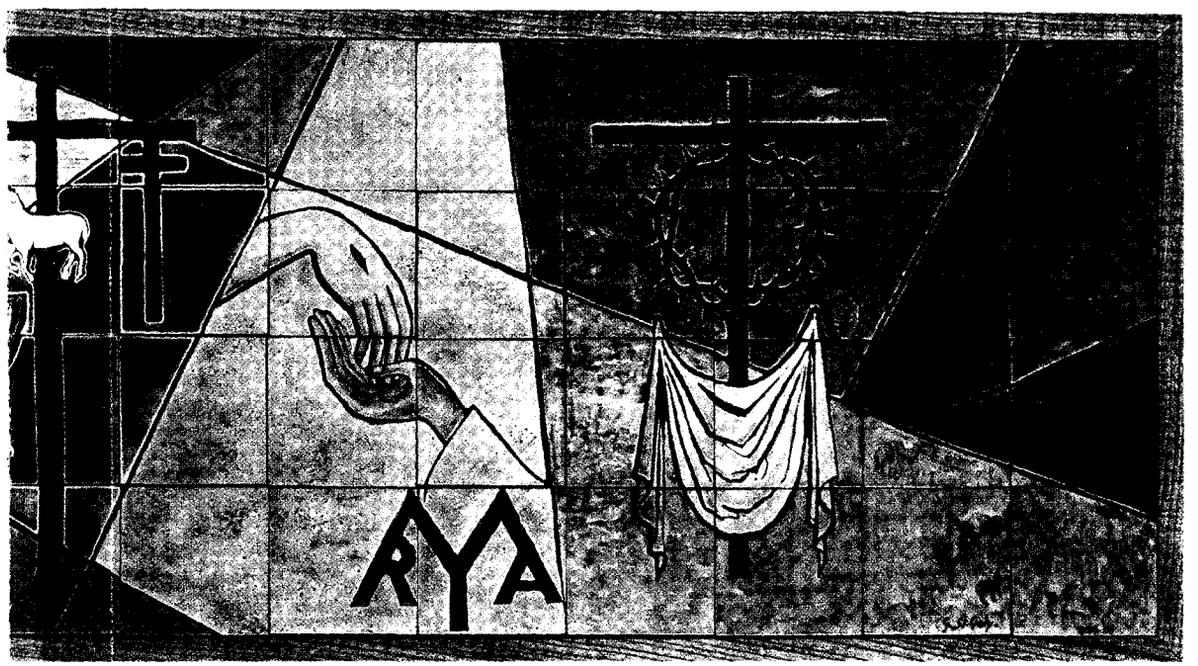

the whole
nong the
g pattern.
lis Cross.
projecting
g motif is
ke Gene-
ngs relief
of Palm
of Mount
aetorium,
lvary and
His Blood
fade into
Crux, the
n earth is
takes on
mood of
ground of
nite linen
of peace
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em, sand
the holy
, and for
ne fate of
hey have

poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem and there was none to bury them;" as accented by the deep purple under the gates. The last fall and various shades of purple lead up to the Crucifixion. The bright coral red, His Holy Blood, is carried through in contrast to the blue motif. It reaches a crescendo on the Cross when the Agnus Dei sheds His Holy Blood into the Grail Cup. From here on the colors resolve in blues and various shades of violet; the **largo** of motherly love finally stands still under the Crown of Thorns and the Death Shroud. **"Salve, Mater dolorosa, Martyrumque prima rosa, Virginumque lilium!"** At the end, a new red is introduced. This is already the promise of Easter morning, the first **alleluia.** It is the flashing light of the Angel of the Lord, who will descend to roll back the stone.

This composition is one large unit, but for reproduction purposes it has been cut into two panels. The division occurs after the seventh Station. In this way, both panels begin with the symbols of Roman law and power, the **fasces** and the sword. This gives a continuity and relates the panels to each other.

(These Stations of the Cross have been planned for the Woodside Priory Chapel, Portola Valley, California)

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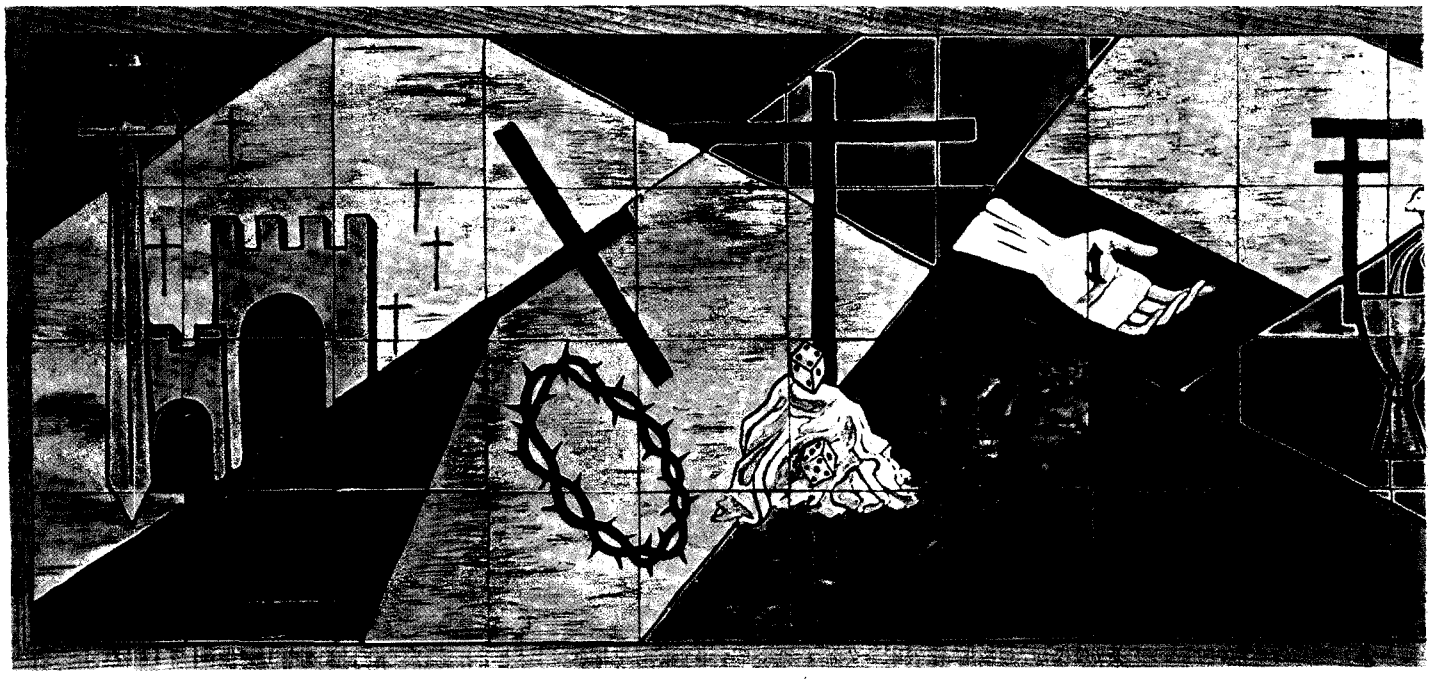

In recent years, some fine Stations have been created by limiting the figures to the main characters, sometimes simply to Christ. Some employ hands or the Cross as the sole symbol. As a religious artist, I have been asked to design the Stations several times. In my search for a solution, I went back for inspiration to the early Romanesque carvers. I tried to capture the spirit and faith of a simple Calvary, dating back to 1430, which I restored on an Austrian hillside. In one composition I combined all the Stations into two large panels, using only broken figures. None of these fully satisfied me.

Slowly the concept of this work took shape. I decided on a subjective panel which would express the colors and emotions awakened in me by the Crucifixion. To achieve this, I broke up the individual scenes, dismissed all figures and combined the various symbols of the Crucifixion, superimposing them on a geometric color background to create one large unit. This solved several historical problems for me. The number of the Stations has varied in the past from eleven to sixteen. I did use the currently accepted fourteen, but suggested that these are only highlighted episodes of one continuous event. In the Scripture no mention is made of Christ's fall under the Cross. I did observe this pious tradition, but I de-emphasized it by using rhythmically moving Crosses and the Crown of Thorn instead of the figure of the fallen Christ. Nor does the Scripture mention His meeting with Mary and Veronica. Again, while observing tradition, I designed a Station on which Christ's meeting with His Mother is simply noted with double initials — this could be a meeting in spirit or in the flesh. Veronica means **vera icon** or true image. It could have been any of the faithful women who pressed past the soldiers to wipe Christ's face with a white towel. The cloth hanging on the standing Cross denotes a moment of relief without disputing this point.

There are only a few Stations (I-VIII-XI-XII) where
Cross is not in evidence. The leaning Crosses ar
standing ones give a sense of movement, a walkin
The whole composition is based on Christ carrying H
It is a **Vox Humana** solo with the accompaniment
the colors of the emotional tensions. The returnin
the blue; it is reminiscent of the blue waters of La
sareth and of Mary's veil. With its cool accent, it bri
and serenity. The greens are those of the glories
Sunday but they transmute into the lonely vigil
Olive. The grays become the stone floors of the Pr
the column where He was scourged, the road to Ca
His grave hewn in the fresh rock. The first reds are
shed under the mocking hands of the soldiers; they
an aura around the Cross as He accepts it. **Ave**
dawn of the Redemption has come. The yellow-brow
His first fall, the simplicity of Simon of Cyrene as he
the Cross. The dirty brown-black portrays the ugly
the crowd and the darkening skies. Against this back
human cruelty and of threatening elements, the wi
cloth with His likeness stands out as the promise
and purity. Another fall: and the feverish red denote
lirious suffering. The ochre yellows around Jerusal
blown by the desert winds, are as Christ speaking tc
women: "Weep not over me but weep for yourselves
your children." (Luke xxiii.27). The prophesy about tl
the city comes to mind and the words of David, "T

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Gates of Horn. A Study of Five French Realists. By Harry Levin. Oxford University Press. 554 pp. $8.50.

TEN YEARS AGO M. Julien Gracq, the well-known French novelist, gave a lecture in London on "The Poetic Novel." Whatever we may think of the merits of M. Gracq's own productions—*Un Beau ténébreux, Au Château d'Argol, Le Rivage des Syrtes*—few of us would be inclined to cavil at the general description of them as *romans poétiques*. A good deal of M. Gracq's lecture was therefore devoted to M. Gracq. Now M. Gracq is a man of catholic tastes and his admiration is not confined to the sort of books that he himself writes. He is an admirer of Stendhal, and not altogether surprisingly *La Chartreuse de Parme* turned up in his lecture as a shining example of the *roman poétique*. Mr. Levin operates under a different banner. He is an apostle of "realism," but like M. Gracq he is a man of catholic tastes and very properly shares the French novelist's reverence for Stendhal. *La Chartreuse de Parme*, he tells us, "is perhaps the most civilised novel ever written." This means of course that somehow or other Stendhal must be got into the realist bag. Mr. Levin feels no difficulty about claiming him or the even more improbable figure of Marcel Proust. Stendhal, we learn, is not merely a realist; he is the virtual inventor of modern realism, the founder of a line which runs through Balzac, Flaubert and Zola to Proust who completes Mr. Levin's group of "five French realists."

Mr. Levin takes his title from a passage in the *Odyssey* in which Homer speaks of two gates: "one gateway of honest horn, and one of ivory."

> "*Homer*," he explains, "*described twin gates: the one of opaque ivory, through which pass fictitious dreams, and the other of transparent horn, which lets out nothing but truth. . . . With the decline of romanticism, we are left to infer, that gate is closing. With the advent of realism the gate of horn opens wider than before, and bodies forth its most portentous truths.*"

In his two opening chapters, "Premises" and "Romance and Realism," he examines the critic's approach to literature and seeks to define the nature of realism.

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In the five substantial studies of individual novelists which follow he proceeds to apply his definitions. In a concluding chapter he considers the relations between "Realism and Reality" and decides that though "there are many windows in the house of fiction . . . few of them are wider or clearer than these [the five novelists], and none has let in more light on the darker places of time and fate and human will."

An undertaking of this kind presents two evident difficulties. The writer has first to define his terms and then demonstrate that they really are of value as critical tools in examining the work of individual authors. Mr. Levin begins by telling us that realism is "that willed tendency of art to approximate [to] reality." He does not attempt, at this stage, to define "reality" which is at least as slippery a term as "realism": it is assumed to mean broadly the world of external perception with an emphasis on material things. He goes on to observe that "realistic fiction has been a characteristic expression of bourgeois society." He remarks a few pages later that the term "bourgeois" is used in a "descriptive sense." "It connotes primarily the culture of cities." He also draws on the different popular associations of the word in support of his thesis. For most of us, realism implies pessimism, the seamy side of life, an element of debunking. "Realistic tendencies," he writes, "had made an early appearance in English literature: Falstaff abjured honor a few years before Sancho Panza."

The words "realistic tendencies" are significant. Mr. Levin is no hide-bound dogmatist; he is not making a plea for absolute realism or anything so crude as the Marxists' "socialist realism." He recognises that realism is one of a number of elements in a literary work and that it necessarily combines with other elements in the same work to produce (as he says) a "synthesis." To this extent his image of the "two gates" is misleading. We all know that Proust's "two ways," which at the beginning of the novel appear to be completely separate, end by converging when that appalling bourgeois upstart, Mme. Verdurin, marries the Prince de Guermantes; but it is difficult to see how two "gates," one providing a passage for "fictitious dreams" and the other for "truth," can combine, converge, or do anything except remain separate. It is fair to say, however, that Mr. Levin does not stick too closely to the Homeric metaphor. He sees all literature as a dialectical movement which does indeed draw its strength from the conflict and final fusion of opposing tendencies.

> "*The works and lives of all poets*," he writes, "as *Goethe had deduced from his own work and life, would seem to oscillate between the poles of* Dichtung *and* Wahrheit. *Innocence and experience, sensibility and sense, appearance and reality—different writers have set forth their dilemmas in their own ways, and yet their terms overlap and interlink.*"

Again:

> "*Any work of imagination is likely to exhibit both tendencies, romantic and realistic; they are by no means confined to those historical movements which we respectively associate with the première of* Hernani *in 1830 and the prosecution of* Madame Bovary *in 1857.*"

The proposition that literature springs from conflict, that the emphasis and the elements vary according to the individual and his age, would be accepted by the majority of responsible critics. They would also accept the proposition that in nearly all works of literature, even in a Dostoevsky, there must be an element of realism—that primitive relation between the work and reality, the link between the writer and the world of common experience—which acts as a controlling factor by curbing the vagaries of individual experience. What seems curious is that Mr. Levin should go to all this trouble to try to convince us that a single element in experience is of paramount importance and that he should imagine that by forcing a label on a disparate group of five writers he has contributed to an understanding of their work. For as soon as he comes to deal with individuals his difficulties increase. He admits frankly that one or two of them objected strongly to being described as realists. "[Flaubert] hated being labelled a realist." In two further passages he appears to recognise that there was some substance in their objections:

> "*In turning from Zola to Proust, the contrast is obviously more striking than the continuity. Side by side, they span the poles between which modern fiction seems to operate: on the one hand a materialistic involvement, on the other an inward withdrawal. Given two French novelists of successive generations, it would be hard to discern less common ground between them.*"

> "*The most effective of those whom, in retrospect, we have agreed to call realists, like Proust, have had little use for the term. His particular kind of realisation, the rediscovery of self through the modalities of art, had little in common with simplifications preached on behalf of literary populism, denunciations launched against a besieged ivory tower, or the other rallying-cries that sounded while he was trying to complete his book.*"

The chapters on the five novelists are primarily discursive essays. For pages on end the author appears to forget his thesis, then suddenly remembers it and throws in a sentence or two about realism which does little to assist us in our appreciation:

> "*It is Balzac who occupies the central position in any considered account of realism.*"

A comment on Proust is still more forced:

> "*Whereas Proust was considered by Valéry Larbaud to be the very incarnation of symbolism, further consideration will show that he retains—or rather, re-*

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gains—a substantial element of naturalism."

If Mr. Levin's thesis had merely prompted sporadic outbursts of special pleading of this kind, we might think that it was no great matter and confine ourselves to what he had to say by way of interpretation of his five novelists. Unfortunately, this is not so. There are many occasions when he throws out hints pointing to the true significance of the novelists only to sheer off without developing them because they would undermine his thesis even more thoroughly than the admissions that I have already quoted:

"*There are many moments when even Balzac is still a visionary.*"

"*A dense underbrush of metaphor, where naked appetites and brute antagonists snap and snarl, luxuriates beneath the literal surface of Balzac's narrative.*"

"*Meaningful juxtaposition is Flaubert's signature, where Balzac's was miscellaneous accretion.*"

"*The antithesis,* le rêve/la réalité, *runs through all Zola's fiction from first to last . . . Zola, for all his scientific pretensions, gained more effect through his symbolic conceptions and epic sweep.*"

If Mr. Levin had followed the clues in these sentences instead of worrying about realism, he would have given us a much more balanced and perceptive account of the French novel in the nineteenth century than he has in fact done. He is perfectly correct in saying, in his final chapter, that "the novel, by historical definition, tends to pursue the real—an unending quest since the object changes its appearance in different contexts and to different observers." The crux of the matter seems to me to lie in the word "real." I suspect that it is because of the inadequacies of his interpretation of it and possibly of his own underlying philosophy that he goes so far astray or, to put it in another way, keeps on peppering the edge of the card instead of putting his shots into the bull's-eye.

The poet, the novelist, the dramatist all offer us an imaginative interpretation of their world, or what we are pleased to call "reality." This interpretation is their "vision." Clearly their conception of the objective has changed from one age to another, from one writer to another. It is quite true that the nineteenth century was divided by the conflict between what Mr. Levin calls "romance" and "realism": that was their strength. The forces released at the time of the Romantic Movement were undirected and uncontrolled with the result that they largely ran to waste. Nineteenth-century realism was, as Mr. Levin suggests, a "synthesis" of the two in the sense that a concentration on the world of external perception provided the discipline which was necessary to canalise and direct these visionary forces. It is true again that "realistic fiction" is "a characteristic expression of bourgeois society." The reason, which the author does not investigate, is interesting. It was due to the shift of power in the nineteenth century from the aristocracy to the middle classes. Stendhal once observed that the boredom of doing descriptions in the manner of Walter Scott would prevent him from writing novels. The reasons for the increase in descriptive writing in the nineteenth century were twofold. The middle classes have always been the *property-conscious* classes. They had in the main acquired their property by work instead of by gift or inheritance. They therefore concentrated on those material things which they had obtained for themselves, which were the sign of their position: their status-symbols. There was another reason which was almost certainly unconscious. In the nineteenth century men clung desperately to material reality—to buildings, bricks and mortar—as the one stable factor, as the one certain "value," in a world of dissolving values.

When we look at the achievement of the five novelists we find that it is rather different from Mr. Levin's account of it. Baudelaire was right when he expressed surprise that Balzac was taken for a realist and declared that his true achievement lay in the fact that "he was a visionary, and a passionate visionary." The *Comédie humaine* survives not as a realistic picture of French life from the Revolution to the close of Louis-Philippe's reign, but as a vision of French society during the first half of the century. Just as there is (in Albert Béguin's words) a *Balzac visionnaire* so there is a *Zola visionnaire*. What is impressive about Zola, as I have observed in an earlier article, is not the science or the theories of heredity or a "photographic" picture of the downfall of the Second Empire, but the *vision* of a gimcrack Empire "drifting slowly and relentlessly to disaster and finally collapsing in smoke and ashes." Mr. Levin seems to reduce *Madame Bovary* to a clash between the romantic dream in Emma's mind and comfortless actuality. What I find most remarkable is Flaubert's use of the recurring image—Mr. Levin's "meaningful juxtaposition." It is a fact that every image, almost every word in the novel is related to something either preceding or coming after it, which provides the essential discipline. For an extreme virtuosity is here pushed to the point at which it becomes vision. The influence of this use of imagery on both Zola and Proust was decisive. Mr. Levin comments on Zola's references to the doomed cities of the Bible, but once again the essential seems to escape him. Zola's symbolism is not less highly systematised than Flaubert's. There is far more than an occasional reference to the biblical cities or even to the Tree of Life in *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*. Nearly all the great Christian dogmas are translated into terms of a naturalist philosophy beginning with Tante Dide—the Eve of the industrialist era—with the coming of original sin into the Rougon-Marquart world, and closing with the spectacle of Clotilde and her child who clearly represent the secularised Madonna and Child of the Naturalist creed. Stendhal fits equally badly into the "realist" nineteenth century.

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The conflict was created by what he himself called *logique* and *espagnolisme*. His roots were deep in the eighteenth century, but the importance of his rationalism is that it provided the discipline for a view of life which at bottom was *contemplative*. Mr. Levin is rightly worried over the difficulty of fitting Proust into his scheme at all and his attempt to do so sadly diminishes that great master. For *A la Recherche du temps perdu* is not simply the most visionary of all novels—the search for what the novelist called *la vraie vie* which he believed was hidden behind the world of appearance—it is a *summa* of the French novel down to the year 1922 which combines all the techniques and most of the virtues of his predecessors from *La Princesse de Clèves* onwards.

I have dwelt on what seem to me to be the shortcomings of Mr. Levin's approach because he himself has laid such emphasis on the importance of realism. I do not want, however, to minimise the interest of his book. It is a work of great erudition which contains much that is informative and entertaining while his comments on the novelists whom he discusses often reveal considerable insight. He remarks of the *Comédie humaine* that "few great structures have been filled with so dangerous a proportion of rubble." Turning to Zola, he observes acutely and amusingly that "*La Bête humaine* would be the poem of the railway line; *Au Bonheur des Dames* . . . the poem of the department store; and *Nana* . . . 'le poème du cul'." "When the bailiffs move in [in *Madame Bovary*] to attach the property, their inventory becomes a kind of autopsy. The household disintegrates before our eyes, as its component items are ticked off, and we think of the auction in *L'Education sentimentale*." The pity of it is that when he can be as perceptive as this, he should waste so many pages on what seems to me to be idle theory.

—Martin Turnell

Avant-Garde: The Experimental Theatre in France. By Leonard Cabell Pronko. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. 225 pp. $6.50.

THE THEATRE is an ever changing phenomenon, and one which, in France, during the past fifteen years has demonstrated exceptional vigor, exceptional boldness in experimentation. Professor Pronko's book *Avant-Garde* is the most recent study in English. It is a well organized, lucidly written book, with a greater emphasis on the history of the theatre than on a critical evaluation of individual plays. The opening chapter describes the debt which the experimental dramatists of the fifties owe to surrealism. The two surrealist texts of Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896) and Apollinaire's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (1918) are, as Mr. Pronko carefully points out, models of theatrical devices and themes which are abundantly used by subsequent playwrights. Mr. Pronko has chosen as the two leading playwrights of the fifties Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco, and devotes to their work a large part of his study. Under the title "Anti-theatre," he analyzes the work of Adamov and Genet. And in a final chapter, "From Babel to Eden," he discusses certain writers who have received less attention: Tardieu, Vauthier, Pichette, Ghelderode, Audiberti and Shehadé.

Additional studies and evaluations of these writers are to be found in the last issue of *Yale French Studies: The New Dramatists* (spring-summer 1962). There is, for example, a brief notice on François Billetdoux, author of four published plays, one of which, *Tchin-Tchin* (1959) has been playing on Broadway. And an article by Jacques Guicharnaud on Arrabal who has come into prominence since 1960. Modes of theatrical production, public taste, critical approval and disapproval are all serious forces which affect the theatre. Its history is being written from day to day.

By definition, a play hailed as *avant-garde* is quickly classified if it remains before the public, and almost before it is able to enjoy the prestige of newness and experimentation, it falls into the category of a standard work. Thus far in the 20th century, the French theatre has produced two important generations. The first flourished in the thirties (Giraudoux, Cocteau, etc.) and the second in the fifties, which is still today referred to as the *avant-garde* or the "theatre of the absurd" and which, in this country, has been the subject of books by Professors Grossvogel and Guicharnaud, and now most recently, Pronko. Between these two generations, in the war years and the second half of the forties, the existentialist theatre, with the plays of Sartre and Camus, and the work of the independent playwright Jean Anouilh were predominant. The structure of the plays in the forties was more traditional than experimental. Not until the early fifties, with the earliest plays of Ionesco and Beckett, is there a marked change in the mode of composition and in the manner of theatrical production which invites such a term as *avant-garde*.

Despite the constant use by critics and historians of such titles as "theatre of the absurd," "experimental theatre," "avant-garde," "new French theatre," the new playwrights of the fifties have not formed a cohesive movement or school. Each one remains a solitary figure, almost fanatically independent. By the end of the decade, they may seem to have more affinities than they did at the beginning, but there is no program uniting them save a determination to create a new kind of theatre. Each has developed his own discipline which is a form of anarchy, a dramaturgy which will not resemble the well made play or the thesis play, or the more classical play of psychological analysis. The four leading playwrights of the fifties, Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov and

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Genet, are far more isolated one from the other than the playwrights of the thirties and the existentialists of the forties. In fact, the solitude in which each one seems to live is undoubtedly an element of their dramaturgy where there is, among the characters, a lack of communication in the ordinary sense.

Unattached, each of the major plays exists by itself, as a solitary projection of anguish or revolt. *Les Bonnes* of Jean Genet and *En attendant Godot* of Beckett are, for example, isolated works, complete in the self-destruction they enact. They seem to be works without ancestors and without heirs. The early plays of Ionesco also give something of this effect of isolation, of being cut off from other contemporary works. But in his more recent plays, in *Rhinocéros* (1958), for example, there is a greater sense of human warmth and human continuity. Bérenger—Mr. Pronko points this out in his chapter on Ionesco—is a character who develops from play to play, in *Tueur sans gages* (1957), in *Rhinocéros*, and in the new play of 1963, *Le Piéton de l'Air*, which has been performed since the publication of Mr. Pronko's book and since the *Yale French Studies* on the new dramatists.

These last plays may well represent, in the career of Ionesco, a turning away from the experimental and a return to a more traditional structure, to a familiar psychological situation. The first traditional characteristic which the avant-garde tried to eradicate was the plot or the story in the usual sense. The new type of play took pride in not lending itself easily to analysis, in its avoidance of a narrative. It is a theatre characterized by a minimum of details from ordinary life, and by a deliberate reduction of psychological discourse. These negative characteristics explain to some degree the startling effect of separate works, of plays without antecedents, in which all movement, all action, all character development have been arrested. The characters are often immobilized physically and mentally. They repeat over and over again the same action and the same words without moving ahead, without making any visible progress.

This static trait of the new plays is apparent in other art forms of today, in the new French novel, for example, and in abstract painting. A recognizable subject matter has disappeared from all of these forms. The dramatists have moved away from literature as a mode of expression in order to make out of their art a way of knowledge, a means of knowing some aspect of reality. Robbe-Grillet's hero who looks through the blinds into his wife's room is immobilized in his pose of *voyeur*, and all action has stopped for Genet's criminals in his play *Haute Surveillance*. Their movements have been arrested in the physical sense, and they have been arrested in a judicial sense also. In Beckett's *Fin de Partie*, the two principal characters move in opposite directions, Hamm toward death and Clov toward life, but one impulse cancels out the other, and finally no progress is made in the bare room that contains the two men.

The one act play or short play, which by its limitations emphasizes a lack of motion or development, has been widely used by the new dramatists in France: *La dernière bande* of Beckett, *Oraison* of Arrabel, *La Leçon* of Ionesco, *Le Professeur Taranne* of Adamov, *Le Cavalier Bizarre* of Ghelderode. As the significance of the contemporary play turns from psychology to metaphysics, from an analysis of predictable actions to a questioning of reality and first principles, a fundamental pessimism about man has become more evident, and in order to focus more and more attention on this pessimism, the playwrights have diminished the value of a stage set, of the number of characters, of plot, of costume and history. The plays are often suitable for the smallest of stages. They bear affinities with a sketch performed in a night club before an intimate audience, members of an audience who have been drinking and who are beginning to think in terms of big generalities and philosophical truths. The plays often have the brevity and the terrifying concentration of a circus act or a vaudeville stunt. Because the work is cut down to its essentials, it has to be performed with virtuosity.

The plays are difficult because they do not fit in with our usual patterns of thought and with our traditional conception of the theatre. *Ubu Roi*, in the pre-surrealist days, was an attack on the conventions and habits of the theatre-going public, and Alfred Jarry, when questioned about his mystifications, used to reply that comprehensible matters would only dull the minds of the spectators, that what was absurd (Jarry was one of the first to use this overused word) would train the faculties and memory of the audience. The plays tend more and more to be direct communications between playwright and listeners. Ionesco, in his play of 1952, *Victimes du Devoir*, outlines this principle when he has his character Nicolas d'Eu explain that there is no longer any such thing as a character who is unified and identifiable. A personality as such does not exist on the stage. All we can hope to see is a man possessing contradictory forces and non-contradictory forces.

The new French theatre has appropriated a philosophical attitude of long standing in the history of philosophy, and one which in recent times was believed in by the surrealists. It is the belief that our vision of reality is an illusion. This vision we have of the world around us is constantly creating hatred, lies, stupidity and tragedy. The classical French theatre, where great importance was placed on psychological problems used a minimum of objects in the action of a play. But the new theatre has stressed the presence of objects in the play's dramaturgy. Cocteau's *Orphée*, in the middle twenties, used in a magical way: a horse, a window, a mirror. An almost bare tree in *Godot* attracts considerable attention. The telephone in *Les Bonnes*, and a dress, are con-

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stant preoccupations in Genet's play. Ionesco, more than any other playwright, has utilized objects: the corpse that grows in size in *Comment s'en débarrasser*, the coffee cups in *Victimes du Devoir*, and a bicycle in *Le Piéton de l'Air*.

In this last play, which was performed in February 1963, at Le Théâtre de France by Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud, the character Bérenger and his wife and daughter are living in a small cottage in England, where he is interviewed by a journalist. It is obvious in many of his speeches that Bérenger is Ionesco, and is speaking directly in the first person about literature and the art of the theatre. He doubts whether literature and the theatre can comprehend the huge complexity of reality. Man is living through a terrifying nightmare. . . . These are familiar convictions in the writings of Ionesco, but they are expressed a bit more forcibly in *Le Piéton de l'Air* where Bérenger claims that literature has never had the tenseness and the power of life. He recapitulates a thought associated with the dramatic theories of Antonin Artaud (*Le Théâtre et son Double*) when he insists that in order to equal life, literature will have to be a thousand times more cruel and more terrifying. With Jarry, Apollinaire and Artaud, Eugène Ionesco is beyond doubt one of those contemporary writers who have reflected deeply on the state of the theatre today and on the meaning of the theatre. If the theatre is able to change, these men would believe that it might incite the spectators to abdicate their usual state of hypnosis or half-somnolence.

The ambition of many of the new creative artists, novelists and painters as well as dramatists, is to exalt a chaos or a labyrinth where they may live through, and be seen living through, a form of metaphysical anguish which is the mark of the 20th century. The scene in Sartre's *La Nausée*, where Roquentin rubs a pebble which is smooth on one side and muddy on the other, is one of the earliest where the protagonist experiences a metaphysical anguish he is unable to explain. Between that scene, published in the late thirties, and the antidramas of Ionesco in the early fifties, and the films of Alain Resnais in the sixties, the artists, and especially the dramatists, show us man in situations where his intelligence is unable to cope with his anguish, where he feels surrounded and besieged by an inhuman element. He lives quite literally the drama of the absurd, which is at the same time a drama of mystery and one of solitude where he is conscious of the presence of familiar things that have no meaning for him.

Just a bit earlier than the outstanding plays often referred to as the theatre of the absurd: Genet's *Les Nègres*, Ionesco's *La Cantatrice Chauve*, Arrabal's *Le Cimetière des Voitures*, for example, there was apparent in the novels of Malraux and Camus, and in the plays of Anouilh, the theme of man's failure to reach an understanding of himself and his world. The tramps of Beckett's *Godot*, who are unreal phantoms unable to find a place in the world for themselves, had already appeared in the works of Kafka and Henri Michaux. *Plume* of Michaux and the protagonist in *The Trial* are beings without a history, weightless and full of fear and anxiety. They are as opposite as possible to the characters of Balzac, each of whom incarnates a system of behavior and a recognizable psychology. A century sufficed to change the outlook of the writer, because already in Stephen Dedalus of Joyce, in Michel of Gide's *L'Immoraliste* and in Matthieu of Sartre's *Age de Raison*, the European protagonist is a conscience feeling itself drawn into a bottomless abyss of freedom.

The drama of this endless freedom, defined by the existentialists as a psychological fact, is now in the theatre of the absurd incarnated by characters who no longer look upon language as the means of communication between human beings. There are usually few characters in the new plays, and often only two at once on the stage, but each one realizes there is no one to whom he can speak. The one who speaks does not expect an answer. The words heard on the stage form a noise which fills the duration in time of the play's action and serves as a distraction from the boredom of speaking only to oneself. The tramp (*clochard*) of Beckett is a choreographic representation of the *outsider*, the everyman of the avant-garde theatre. *L'étranger*, the title used by Albert Camus, is merely one name designating the non-conformist. He is a type of amnesiac who has lost contact with the past. Alienation is the fundamental theme, although it is sometimes disguised, of the new plays, and the spectacle of this alienation which we watch on the stage, is fully calculated to turn the spectator into himself, to force him to an examination of the human condition. The characters of Arrabal, Vauthier, Beckett and Ionesco are quite clearly our own consciences who have reached a superior degree of sincerity. In their most successful instances, the plays are testimonials of sincerity, in which the playwright is more concerned with depicting the condition of man's fate than in demonstrating the tragedy of any one individual hero.

—Wallace Fowlie

The Dyer's Hand. By W. H. Auden. New York: Random House. 527 pp. $7.50.

"Poets themselves are the most proper, though not, I conclude, the only critics." It was Dryden who said that, but Auden quotes the sentence, and poets have generally subscribed to the sentiment. It is not, I think, a true statement—or at least it is true only with limitations which the poets have not usually been inclined to make. We do, to be sure, read the poet-critics (if we read criticism at all, and the man who does so voluntarily

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must be a fairly rare bird); but we do so in the hope that the critic will illuminate the poet, and not with any expectation of finding general poetic principles. Poets may be the most proper critics, but only when they are talking about themselves, and not always even then.

It is not surprising, then, that *The Dyer's Hand* is not a major contribution either to criticism or to critical theory; Auden is simply taking his place among all the other self-explicating poets. But because Auden is an important poet, this is an important book, and one which will help more toward clarifying Auden's later verse than any criticism that has yet been written about him. Because Auden is the most intelligent of living poets, and the wittiest, the clarification is more pleasurable than critical clarification usually is.

The Dyer's Hand explicates Auden in two fundamental ways. First, it tells us a good deal that is directly relevant to particular poems. Anyone who knows Auden's verse at all knows that he is naturally inclined to abstract thought, and to the verbal forms that such thought takes. Whether he is dealing in Socialism and Groddeckian psychology, as in the Thirties, or in Christian Existentialism, as more recently, he has what Mr. Eliot would call a dissociated sensibility, a mind largely committed to abstraction, and not naturally inclined to the celebration of particulars. This makes his verse curiously dependent on external systems of thought: one cannot read "Kairos and Logos" without Tillich, or *For the Time Being* without Kierkegaard. *The Dyer's Hand* is full of useful formulations of such informing ideas, and difficult works like *The Sea and the Mirror*, for instance, should be more available because one has read the block of essays called "The Shakespearian City."

But aside from this rather mechanical kind of exegesis, these essays expound Auden's beliefs, the philosophical content of his ample mind. Like most modern poets, Auden is an intellectual who could not take the world for granted—who has had to construct something to be intellectual about. These essays correspond, in a rough way, to Yeats' *Vision*, Graves' *White Goddess*, and Stevens' *Necessary Angel*. Like all these examples, they are not really worth reading unless you are seriously interested in the poetry of the author; if you are, they are very worthwhile indeed, for they contain the substance of Auden's myth-making imagination.

Myth-making is an enterprise that the modern poet seems necessarily committed to, if he is to be a poet of substance, and one trustworthy way of distinguishing the major modern poets from the poetasters and university wits is to look for the myth, the personal and copious ordering of experience. Auden's myth takes its philosophical foundations from Christian Existentialism—Anxiety, the Absurd, Eros and Agape are terms that keep turning up—and its particulars from a vast range of literary examples, from music (especially opera), from history, and from science. These particulars are heterogeneous, and apparently random; they give the essays an engagingly amateur quality, like the conversation of a witty, cultivated man who does something else for a living. But the foundations are solid and serious, and seeing them set out in discursive prose, one more easily sees how firmly the ideas underlie the important later poems.

Auden's mind seems always to have been the sort that codifies, systematizes, and abstracts—the sort, that is to say, that we associate with science and systematic philosophy rather than with poetry. Recollections by his friends of the young Auden stress his austere clinical manner, and he himself has described, both in prose and in verse, his early interest in science and technology. This scientific cast of mind shows in Auden's writing in his tendency to classify and generalize, and his lack of interest in particulars, including individual characters. His verse contains no personally numinous objects (like Yeats' Golden Bird and Tower, and Eliot's Rose Garden), and no personalities, not even the "I" of Romantic poetry. Unlike his fellow "Pylon School" poets, Spender and Day Lewis, he has not written fiction, and this may be because he thinks of fiction as a form in which "you cannot avoid the individual." Auden's verse seems devoted to avoiding the individual, and to seeking that Heaven which he ironically describes in *The Sea and the Mirror*—"The Heaven of the Really General Case."

In the essays, this quality of Auden's mind manifests itself in a number of ways: in an habitual classifying and defining of abstractions, in a relentless translation of plot into allegory, and in a highly aphoristic style. That Auden feels at ease with the aphoristic expression of ideas, his own pensées—"Squares and Oblongs" and the "Interlude" of *Homage to Clio*—show; so does his use of quotations in his essays. The essays often read like bundles of aphorisms loosely stuck together, and one could compose out of this volume a quite substantial collection of Wise Sayings by the Poet Auden—one of those "Thought-a-Day-the-Whole-Year-Round" collections that the Victorians used to mine so industriously from the writings of the great. *My* collection would include:

A scientific statement which was not banal would not be true;

and

Man is a history-making creature who can neither repeat his past nor leave it behind;

and

The great vice of Americans is not materialism but a lack of respect for matter;

and perhaps

When I find myself in the company of scientists, I feel like a shabby curate who has strayed by mistake into a drawing room full of dukes.

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One must be grateful to a critic who can write as well as that.

Auden's habit of classifying and defining gives, at best, a clarity and precision to his ideas which the metaphorically formulated myths of poets like Yeats and Graves can never approach. For instance, when he says that "there are four aspects of our present *Weltanschauung* which have made an artistic vocation more difficult than it used to be," he proceeds to define them in order:

1) *The loss of belief in the eternity of the physical universe;*
2) *The loss of belief in the significance and reality of sensory phenomena;*
3) *The loss of belief in a norm of human nature which will always require the same kind of man-fabricated world to be at home in.*
4) *The disappearance of the Public Realm as the sphere of revelatory personal deeds.*

This is excellent, concise, and true—an explanation of the philosophical environment of modern literature that any student of the subject should be required to memorize. But clearly this sort of manner is only tolerable when the substance is unimpeachably true and important; sometimes the manner appears without appropriate matter, the *ex cathedra* voice without a cathedra. When Auden lists the five ways in which animals may appear in literature, for example, he sounds like a parody of systematic criticism, though apparently he is entirely in earnest.

Auden's mind is not only a classifying and aphorism-making one; it is also relentlessly parabolic (to use one of his favorite words). His first response to a work of art seems to be to ask himself, "How can this be transformed into an abstract representation of a general idea?" Here is an example of the parabolic mind at work, from Auden's essay, "Balaam and his Ass":

> *To illustrate the use of the master-servant relationship as a parable of agape, I will take two examples from books which present the parable in a clear, simplified form,* Around the World in Eighty Days *by Jules Verne and the* Jeeves *series by P. G. Wodehouse.*

One must recognize, of course, that the critic who maintains an amateur or dilettante relationship to his practice preserves thereby the right to clown around at it, and Auden certainly has a good deal of the clown in him. Nevertheless, one may conclude that it is doubtful strategy to grace a serious essay on the nature of Christian love with quite these examples.

Although Auden's critical career goes back almost forty years, he has not included any work from the first twenty years in this volume. This means that he has left out important earlier essays like the two on Yeats, the one on Rilke, "Mimesis and Allegory," and the introductions to Tennyson, Baudelaire, and the Grimm and Andersen fairy tales. The principles of selection, as nearly as I can make them out, have been these: 1) nothing from the political-psychological days before World War II; 2) nothing which cannot be fitted into a general Christian Existentialist argument. Consequently, Auden has rejected all that work which is not the product of, and harmonious with, his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. Now we must all rejoice that Auden the religious man has been born again, but we can only regret that he has taken his re-birth to imply a radical discontinuity, poetical and critical as well as religious, between his two lives. The Thirties may no longer exist for Auden, but they exist for the rest of us, and those of use who want to understand what made young poets become Marxists, go to Spain, and write "flat ephemeral pamphlets" have had our task made harder by Auden's perversity.

Another tiresome aspect of Auden's change of heart has been its effect on his texts. Anyone who has read Joseph Warren Beach's book, *The Making of the Auden Canon,* knows how strenuously Auden revised his early work to make it conform to his later views. In revising his poems, he is of course in very good company: Yeats remade his poems again and again, and both Robert Graves and Stephen Spender have been liberal with their revisions. But Auden's revisions are unique among modern instances, in being dictated by doctrinal changes. His wish to obscure any changes and developments in his beliefs must be what led him to arrange his *Collected Poetry* in the least useful possible way—alphabetically by first word—and to attach to many poems new and ludicrously inappropriate titles. The same perverse confusion of text and chronology mars *The Dyer's Hand.* Some of the essays ("Making, Knowing and Judging," for instance, and "The Guilty Vicarage") are printed without substantial changes, but others are new collections of revised odds and ends from many sources. The substance of his original "Dyer's Hand," as it appeared in the *Anchor Review* six years ago, has been scattered over two long essays; bits of aphorisms from "Squares and Oblongs," published in 1948, turn up in a new collection of pensées called "Writing," and in "Postscript: The Frivolous and The Earnest." No doubt there are many other examples of such extensive reconstructing.

The general effect of this revising is to make the whole 500 pages of *The Dyer's Hand* uniform in style and in ideas, and therefore redundant and eventually boring. No one will wish the book longer than it is. A good many of Auden's admirers may wish it different though, and I am one of them. I liked the early, shocking, militant Auden—the one in the old photograph, wearing a dirty shirt and lighting a cigarette butt—a good deal better than this philosophical cleric. But apart from personal preference, Auden cannot escape the fact that he helped to make a literary revolution—and that the revolution he made helped to make him.

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Old revolutionists traditionally renounce their pasts, and settle down to grow anonymous roses, but surely literary revolutionists have some responsibility to keep their past alive and available. Let's hope that in time a fat volume of the earlier stuff will appear—and that it will appear as it was written, unrevised, militant, and unreconstructed.

—Samuel Hynes

Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow. By F. R. Leavis and an *Essay on Sir Charles Snow's Rede Lecture* by Michael Yudkin. New York: Pantheon, 64 pp. $1.65.

F. R. Leavis's polemic Richmond Lecture on Sir Charles Snow caused a row when it was given at Cambridge last year and later printed in the *Spectator*. Leavis has now reprinted it, making the full text available for the first time in this country and providing a "New Preface for the American Reader." As a companion piece, he has added an essay by Michael Yudkin, a Cambridge bio-chemist, who thinks hardly better of Snow than does Leavis himself. The thin book thus patched together and growing out of an hour's lecture given on the eve of Leavis's retirement from teaching may well turn out his most durable. Not, God knows, because it presents a new or mellowed Leavis, but because Leavis has found in Snow the subject he is equal to and the one that fits his method.

F. R. Leavis has usually worked in the large critical round and the sweeping dismissal: it is his signature. His way of establishing that T. S. Eliot is the greatest of modern English poets, for example, was to assert that Spenser, Milton, Gray, Shelley, Browning, and Tennyson were hardly poets at all. For they had been unlucky enough to work outside the real tradition of English poetry, of which, the reader was given to understand, Leavis and his cohorts on *Scrutiny* were the appointed and pretty much sole guardians and expositors. The real tradition of English poetry, as reconstructed by Leavis, flows from Shakespeare and the Metaphysical poets and produces Eliot as the "far-off, divine event/ to which the whole creation moves." Leavis is clearly a man who enjoys sweep and scale in his pronouncements. And he has liked to keep active too. When he came to write his book on the English novel, *The Great Tradition*, Leavis found it necessary to dismiss Defoe, Fielding, Richardson, Dickens—*Hard Times* excepted—and Thackeray because they offered nothing to engage the intelligence of an adult. Leavis is rather like "the Hotspur of the north, he that kills . . . some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work.' "

There is a good deal of the crank in Leavis altogether—the cockiness, the irascibility, the almost reflexive defiance of received opinions. But he has too a quality that has got vary rare in our time, a real sense of the value of the human person. And he has been right to find that sense wholly lacking in C. P. Snow and to blast Snow for it. It is the main point made in the Richmond Lecture and Leavis makes it very tellingly. The same damaging point was later made by John Wain who, in the following passage, first quotes and then comments on a television interview between Snow and Malcolm Muggeridge:

> *Muggeridge: Could you imagine yourself living happily in a Communist society?*
> *Snow: I think so. It would depend a bit on what I, on my particular profession. You mean me as . . .*
> *Muggeridge: Yes, you as you.*
> *Snow: You mean me as me.*
> *Muggeridge: You, writer-scientist.*
> *Snow: Yes, I think so. . . .*
>
> *The slight difficulty over identification here ("You mean me as* me?") *reflects the bureaucratic habit of mind very accurately. It seems almost as if, in Sir Charles's eyes, nothing as statistically insignificant as an individual person could be quite real. His happiness in a Communist country would depend ("a bit") on what he was doing; that is, whether he was on top, handing it out, or down below, taking it.*

Many readers have had the uneasy sense with Snow that something was wrong there beneath all that Blimpish affability, and it is Leavis's distinction to have been the first to isolate and define it. One does not, of course, question Snow's good intentions: he is clearly more fool than knave, to invoke the eighteenth century categories. Snow is bursting with good intentions; if he were cut, he would bleed *Atlantic Monthly* articles. But he has no sense of the value of the private human person, and Leavis has been right to have at him.

The whole shooting match between Leavis and Snow looked at first like one of those things that might be shrugged off. It was the sort of subject on which one anticipated an early "communication from Jacques Barzun." (As a matter of fact, Lionel Trilling did soon come into the fray on the side of Snow.) One thought of the whole thing as having approximately the low comedy appeal of one of those matches between British Heavyweights in which Inefficiency (Leavis) flails away at Impotence (Snow). But it is more than that. For Leavis sees quite correctly that Snow is a portent. Leavis overdoes this point somewhat and also his own disinterestedness in the whole matter—for he clearly enjoys doing Snow in—but about the basic fact Leavis is right: "The judgment I have to come out with is that not only is he not a genius; he is intellectually as undistinguished as it is possible to be. If that were all, and Snow were merely negligible, there would be no need to say so in any insistent public way, and one wouldn't choose to do it. But I used the adverb 'portentously'

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just now with full intention: Snow is a portent. He is a portent in that, being in himself negligible, he has become for a vast public on both sides of the Atlantic a master-mind and a sage. His significance is that he has been accepted—or perhaps the point is better made by saying 'created': he has been created as authoritative intellect by the cultural conditions manifested in his acceptance." Leavis goes on to describe Snow's reputation as a product of the arts of literary publicity, particularly of puffs in the metropolitan literary journals and such semi-official organs of government as the British Council—"he is a British Council classic." Some such explanation has to be behind all the excited talk about Snow being a major novelist. On the basis of an admittedly inextensive acquaintance with the novels, I find them inferior Galsworthy.

But with the Snow essays, I had been somewhat more impressed, particularly with *Science and Government* and its demonstration that the massive bombing raids of World War II were not only criminal—they were aimed at the German population, not the German war plant—but criminally stupid as well, in that they were largely ineffectual. The book's one excursion into literary criticism was unfortunate though. "Satire is cheek," Snow wrote, "the revenge of those who cannot really comprehend the world or cope with it." This observation was followed with a superscript, and while I paged back to the supporting footnote I thought of Horace, Voltaire, Johnson—all men who had practiced satire and comprehended the world and coped tolerably well. The footnote was a gem of bathos, "of purest ray serene." It read: "I owe this remark, which seems to me truer the more I think of it, to Pamela Hansford Johnson." Pamela Hansford Johnson is Lady Snow, and perhaps we may expect from that quarter a whole theory of the genres. All in exceedingly British monosyllables: "Satire is cheek"; "Epic is swank"; "Lyric is swill"; and so forth. Each definition to be followed by an abject sentence from Snow declaring that the more he thinks of it, the more he thinks it true. There is something very *rum* about the whole thing.

Leavis directs himself to the best known of all the Snow essays, *The Two Cultures*, and when he has done there is very little left of Snow the essayist. Leavis points out the carelessness in Snow's handling of terms which permits the "literary culture" suddenly to become "the traditional culture" as though they were the same thing. Snow is thus able to belabor "literary intellectuals" for all the failings of society. Even the Yudkin essay, which is much less polemic than Leavis's, points to the inadequacies and the distortions in Snow's definitions: "Sir Charles himself makes a half-apology for his lack of precision, but curiously enough he is more concerned with the number two than the term 'culture.' " Snow's well known thesis, that the split between the scientific and literary cultures must be ended, is rejected sweepingly by Leavis who says that what Snow is really calling for is capitulation to technologists and bureaucrats like himself. And Leavis is echoed by Yudkin, who says that Snow's proposal is not only impossible, given the highly specialized state of science today, but not even, as Snow had assumed, desirable. Leavis is very destructive too with the Snow prose; he has a romp with that, as he well might: its frequent cliché, its tone, "a tone of which one can say that while only genius could justify it, one cannot readily think of genius adopting it," and so forth.

One last point. The Snow faction have complained that Leavis's lecture was personal and unfair. This is, first of all, untrue. And, secondly, coming from that quarter, it is most unbecoming. Snow has had so much to say after all about the "feline" manner in which literary controversy is usually managed. And he has been fond of contrasting with this the tough, open manner in which scientific chaps like himself proceed in these matters. Leavis has the exuberance of an imperfectly trained bullterrier. Snow will have found him, one ventures to guess, sufficiently unfeline.

—Warren Coffey

In Parenthesis. By David Jones. New York: The Chilmark Press. 226 pp. $5.75.

David Jones is a painter, illustrator, and engraver by trade. Born in Kent in 1895 of a Welsh father and an English mother, he was sent at fourteen to an art school where he stayed until 1915 when he enlisted in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He served in the trenches and was wounded in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. After the war he returned to his study of art, and in 1921 became a Roman Catholic convert and went to live and study in the Eric Gill household. In 1928, he began the writing of *In Parenthesis*, with no intention, he has said, of publishing it, but only to set down his own impressions of the War. At the urging of a friend, we are told, he submitted the typescript in 1937 to Faber and Faber, where T. S. Eliot was an editor. Eliot, writing in 1961, said: "*In Parenthesis* was first published in 1937. I am proud to share the responsibility for that first publication. On reading the book in typescript, I was deeply moved. I then regarded it, and I still regard it, as a work of genius." The book was very successful with the critics and in 1938 won the Hawthornden Prize. Since then Jones has written two other books: *The Anathemata*, which Auden has called "one of the most important poems of our times" and *Epoch and Artist*, a collection of essays.

In Parenthesis is the most considerable of Jones' books: with *Parade's End* and *Goodbye to All That* it is one of the three best books on World War I to come out of England. Having said this, I will be permitted to say that *In Parenthesis* is a weak and distant third to the

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books of Ford and Graves and give reasons for saying so. *In Parenthesis* is a novel in seven parts about the experiences of a British private soldier, John Ball, between December, 1915 and July, 1916. We follow him as he is marched to an embarkation port and onto a troopship bound to Flanders. Then into the trenches and through an attack in the Battle of the Somme in which Ball is wounded and a good many of his fellow soldiers killed. Of all this Jones often writes very movingly, as here: "the rifle strength, the essential foot-mob, the platoon wallahs, the small men who permanently are with their sections, who have no qualifications, who look out surprisedly from a confusion of gear, who endure all things . . ." Even here, though, Jones skirts sentimentality: the emphasis on *smallness*, on the inability to cope with big *male* equipment is out of Charles Lamb, the "Gentle Elia" touch on which E. B. White has taken out the exclusive North American rights. Only the wryness of "who permanently are with their sections" and the sternness of "who endure all things" save the passage from becoming wan. And thus we are led to the main fault of David Jones's writing: he does the Welsh business pretty thickly.

Kingsley Amis has written best on the Welsh cult, the "wild valley babblers, woaded with pit dirt and sheep shit, thinking in Welsh the whole time and obsessed by terrible beauty, etc."—a cult formed in the wake of Dylan Thomas and to be perceived at its rankest in Emlyn Williams, who from impersonating Thomas on the stage has grown a manufacturer of what he takes to be bardic prose. *In Parenthesis* was around, of course, well before Dylan Thomas, and David Jones is a writer of another water entirely than Emlyn Williams. But he has been taken in by his Welshness and cultivates it quite a lot. Only one example can be given. In Part Three, Jones uses the word *glast:* "Do dogs of Annwn glast this starving air. . . ." The reader turns to the footnote—*In Parenthesis* has thirty-four pages of footnotes—only to find "Glast is an obsolete word meaning, apparently, to bark a lot." The *apparently* is revealing: Jones often uses words not for their meaning but for their sound and their look on the page, presumably in the belief that this habit is Welsh or Celtic and therefore poetic. The British have encouraged their Celtic subjects to think this way in order that they may be more easily ruled. More or less as the British starve the Irish, or turn the artillery on Dublin, or send in the Tans, they produce literary critics who exclaim, "The Celt, how beautiful his soul!" or "The Irish have a genius." And good men on both sides continue to be deluded. As good a mind as Matthew Arnold's could go all soft in rhapsodies about the Celt or, through the years, as good a poet as Yeats. Yet the fallacy in it all is plain. And it is a large part of the explanation of why David Jones's *In Parenthesis* is not a first-rate novel.

Jones seems torn between the desire to write a novel and the desire to write a lyric poem, very possibly a lyric poem in Welsh. His prose is full of borrowings from poets, like this one from Hopkins: ". . . you implicate your tin-hat rim with the slack sling of it." The characters seem sometimes to exist as pegs on which the author can hang poetic reveries full of Welsh proper nouns with multitudinous l's and n's. Jones has a fondness for archaic words and spellings that is more highly developed than anything since "the boy, Chatterton." The section of his novel which deals with John Ball's introduction to trench life in Moggs Hole and Cats Post has to be called "King Pellam's Launde." Behind all of this, of course, is the very laudable desire to see twentieth century warfare, the experience of twentieth century men, as somehow continuous with a tradition that gave meaning and order to life. But Jones is unable to make the Celtic legends part of the consciousness of his characters: somebody standing in a trench called Moggs Hole is not very likely to think he is in "King Pellam's Launde." Yet David Jones, it must be admitted, came out of such a trench and is able in the lyric, if not in the narrative, sections of his book to make us see the trench his way. At least part of the time he can set "the horns of Elfland faintly blowing." But his Welsh lyricizing gets between him and the action of his book: he is always pursuing reveries instead of writing about characters who are doing things.

In Parenthesis lacks the large, robust plotting and characterization of the *Parade's End* novels of Ford, and it lacks the no-nonsense power of Robert Graves' autobiographical *Goodbye to All That*. But David Jones is a writer of uncommon imagination and an uncommonly fine ear. Many of his passages of Cockney—I do not want to omit mentioning these—provide a delightfully comic counterpoint to the lyrical strain of his book. Since Hemingway, those who have written about war have usually had only one object in view: to show how well their heroes take a punch. David Jones made a brave try at something else.

—Warren Coffey

Twenty German Poets. A Bilingual Collection. Selected, translated, and introduced by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House. 305 pp. $5.00.

IT IS NOT EASY to review dispassionately any one of the "dozen books" which, according to the publisher's blurb, Walter Kaufmann has authored. Born in Freiburg, Germany, in 1921, Kaufmann holds a Ph.D. degree from Harvard and a professorship in philosophy at Princeton. Among his publications, his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950) and his excellent translation of some of Nietzsche's works in *The Portable Nietzsche* (1954) rank highest. Unfortunately, the success of these books seems to have had some unbalancing effect on Kaufmann's subsequent

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production. Like Heinrich Heine, his *Abgott*, Kaufmann is gifted with *unverschämt viel Talent*—a superabundance of talents which appear to have seduced him to engage in several ventures of *haute vulgarisation*, such as his *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (1956), his *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (1958), or *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (1959), works which are as shallow as they are over-ambitious.

Kaufmann's bilingual edition of selected poems by twenty German authors belongs to the last mentioned category of Kaufmann *opuscula*. This time the panorama presented extends "from Goethe to Hermann Hesse." These publications have in common some rather unpleasant characteristics: first, an overbearing self-assurance amounting to a sort of infallibility complex; second, a growing subjectivism and a correspondingly increasing lack of just and sober critical judgment; and last but by no means least, a pontifical lofty *hauteur* which is not at all redeemed by Kaufmann's linguistic-stylistic versatility and his undeniable broad perspectives and often acute intellectual intuitions.

Those familiar with Kaufmann's ways as an author will not be surprised that in this present volume both his selections and his brief prefatory appraisals exhibit unabashedly the editor's likes and dislikes: Kaufmann loves Goethe, Heine, and Nietzsche; he intensely dislikes Schiller, and he has only lukewarm praise, mingled with strictures and censures, for most of the remaining poets. And let it be observed parenthetically that Kaufmann's hatred of the philosopher Martin Heidegger and all his works is an inveterate ingredient of his thinking and writing. It is slightly amusing to see this emotional bias crop up on several unlikely occasions, e.g., in connection with the discussion of some poems by Hölderlin, Rilke, and Trakl. Missing completely—for reasons only known to Walter Kaufmann—are poems by Claudius, Brentano, Platen, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Gottfried Keller, Carossa, Bergengrün, Gertrude von Le Fort, Ricarda Huch, F. G. Jünger, and Bert Brecht. The critical reader is really amazed, therefore, to find the all but forgotten Felix Dahn represented with the *urdeutsche* "*Hagen's Sterbelied*." Admirers of the *Nibelungenlied* will be mildly nauseated by Dahn's involuntary caricature.

In his general Introduction Kaufmann states that his selections are to "facilitate a better understanding of German poetry. . . . My aim has been to make the translations extremely faithful, not only in meaning but also in tone. . . . I have generally followed the original meters and rhymes. . . . The sequence of the poets, and of the poems by each poet, is roughly chronological. . . . Prefaces precede the selections from every poet. . . . No suggestion whatsoever is intended that poems omitted here are necessarily inferior to all those included, or even that all the poets represented here are superior to all the rest." This latter statement is of course intended to ward off in advance the reproach of arbitrariness in the choice of poets and their poems. But this avowed impartiality is controverted by the many apodictic value judgments pronounced in the individual prefaces. The two pages, for example, which precede the Schiller poems, give evidence of a complete failure to appreciate (or even refer to) the greatness of Schiller, the man, the poet, the playwright, the historian, and the philosopher. To inveigh against Schiller's "excessive moral preaching" and to say that (despite, or because of Schiller's "solid decency"?) "as a poet he is not in the same class with Goethe" is rather ludicrous. The preface to the Hölderlin poems fails to mention the decisive *Diotima* (Susette Gontard) experience. Eichendorff, without doubt the greatest among the poets of late German romanticism, is represented with *one* poem *(Der Einsiedler)*, while Heine is represented with six, none of them, however, related to the great tragic climax in Heine's progress as a man and a poet—the poems of the *Matratzengruft*, moving literary documents of a spirituality seasoned by great suffering. Kaufmann's "Heine-fixation" assumes at times almost grotesque proportions: "In the period from about 1830 until at least 1880, if not 1900, Germany had only one world-historical poet, Heinrich Heine." And "Heine was the herald of Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Gide, Joyce and Mann, Morgenstern, Benn, and Kästner." *Sapienti sat!* We have here a case of racism in reverse. This explains also Kaufmann's strange attack on the great literary historian Gundolf who, as a member of Stefan George's *Kreis der Blätter für die Kunst*, had once dared to say of Heine that with him "begins the anarchy of the German language." Therefore, *écrasez l'infâme!* "Friedrich Gundolf, himself born a Jew with the name of Gundelfinger" had actually criticized a fellow-Jew!

Without entering into a further analysis of the strong and weak points of Kaufmann's entirely too sketchy and superficial prefaces, it should be noted that in the portrayal of Christian Morgenstern as well as in the selections from his poetry any reference to the spiritual dimension which Morgenstern owed to his association with Rudolf Steiner and his Anthroposophy is missing. And, similarly, in the cursory discussion of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, the reason why they appear to Kaufmann "somewhat overrated" lies in the simple fact that Kaufmann lacks the organ that would permit him to appreciate the Elegies' metaphysico-religious content and significance.

The quality of Kaufmann's translations ranges all the way from awkward and mediocre to fair, good, and excellent. Perhaps Kaufmann is at his very best as a translator in his rendition of Nietzsche's *Die Sonne sinkt*. The first stanza may serve to illustrate:

Not long will you thirst,
burnt out heart!
A promise is in the air,

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from unknown lips it blows at me
—the great chill comes.

My sun stood hot over me at noon—
be welcome that you come,
you sudden winds,
you chilly spirits of afternoon!

The air moves strange and pure.
Does not with warped
seductive eyes
night leer at me?
Stay strong, courageous heart!
Do not ask: why?

—Kurt F. Reinhardt

Young Man in Chains. By François Mauriac. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. 124 pp. $3.75.

THIS ENGLISH translation of the great French writer's first novel, written between 1909 and 1912, completes the English edition of Mauriac's narrative works, begun shortly after the liberation of France by Gerard Hopkins. Mauriac's novelistic *oeuvre* spans more than half a century. *Young Man in Chains (L'Enfant chargé de chaînes)* though lacking the spiritual depth of some of the author's more mature works, such as *A Woman of the Pharisees, Thérèse*, and especially the masterful psychological character portrayals of *Vipers' Tangle*—is nonetheless a genuine documentation of Mauriac's genius as a novelist.

Generally speaking, Mauriac has never claimed to be either a theologian or a philosopher. Each of his novels expresses a view of life and reality distinctly his own, born of unmistakable personal experience; and each of them accentuates one specific facet of his total *Weltanschauung* as well as a highly personalist reaction to some unique existential situation. Perhaps the one all-pervasive theme, providing a sort of *leitmotif*, is the experience of loneliness with its concomitant mood of profound melancholy.

When seen in historical perspective, Mauriac's novelistic *oeuvre* is marked by a decisive conquest of certain aspects of reality which by and large had remained *terra incognita* to the traditional and conventional Catholic novel, aspects and dimensions which were fractionally embodied in the works of Zola, Flaubert, Stendhal, Gide, and Proust, wholly incarnate perhaps only in the religious experience of Pascal, with whose thinking Mauriac was already thoroughly familiar during the formative years he spent at the *lycée*. What was missing, however, in the works of the French naturalists and symbolists alike was the dimension of *the eternal*.

Notwithstanding the fact that Mauriac realized and emphasized the vital significance of the massive influences of environment and heredity, he was convinced that what was needed to counteract and counterbalance these determining factors was *une sur-naturalisme* which alone could eventually break down the prison walls erected by biological and social determinants and could thus aid the individual in his struggle for self-determination, liberation, and salvation. In other words, Mauriac fought his way through to the clear visualisation of the nature of *grace:* only divine grace could resolve the otherwise hopeless entanglement of man in the thickets of depravity and perversion. And Mauriac came to regard it as the appointed task of the Christian writer to unveil the divine image in sinful man—a task which could be fulfilled only if the writer refrained from sentimental idealization and adhered to the strictest kind of natural-supernatural "realism."

"The giving of one's self," Mauriac wrote in an essay dealing with the art form of the novel, "the taste of purity and perfection, the hunger and thirst for justice, these too are part of the patrimony of man; and we novelists must bear witness to it. . . . We must dedicate ourselves to the discovery of the inner life, and we are not permitted to hide any of our discoveries." Mauriac has stated furthermore that the true cornerstone of his work is "the physical presence of grace." The simple and profound meaning of this phrase is—in the words of Bernanos and Graham Greene—that "grace is everywhere," regardless of whether the individual human being chooses to acknowledge or to ignore this omnipresence.

As is the case with several of Mauriac's novels, *Young Man in Chains* is in part autobiographical. Like the young Mauriac, Jean-Paul Johanet, the protagonist of the novel, is alone with himself as a student in Paris, feasting intellectually on the exultation deriving from his indulgence in the literary masterpieces of the *fin du siècle* (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, etc.). This is the kind of life of which Mauriac speaks in his *Mémoires Intérieurs* (1960): "All that I write today had its beginnings fifty years ago in that little club room of the Bordeaux *Sillon*. . . . I was filled with intellectual pride, as a young man so often is who has led an isolated existence in a remote countryside."

Jean-Paul is one of the idle "rich" whom nothing and nobody compels to look for a gainful occupation. Yet Jean-Paul is profoundly nauseated by an acute sense of personal failure and uselessness. The scenes which he encounters on his annual expensive travels are "powerless to console him" or to mitigate the painful experience of being and remaining an "outsider": "All cities look alike," and "the little world which I carry within myself never changes." Jean-Paul's relationship to his fellow-students is decidedly a-social and non-existential, although he enjoys watching them live their lives, giving them advice, even acting as their director: "He turned their feet from the primrose path by telling them of his own struggles of conscience . . . and of the orgies in

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which he had participated before his conversion. . . . In this circle of young Catholics, Jean-Paul turned theologian. He spiced his talk with a grain of modernism," and his familiarity with Kantian philosophy "allowed him to demonstrate that St. Thomas Aquinas was no longer enough. He spoke with irony of the Encyclical *Pascendi* . . . and declared that the time had come to revert to the great mystical tradition."

Jean-Paul's chance meeting with Vincent Hiéron, a former schoolmate, leads to a temporary affiliation with the members of *Amour et Foi*, a religious-social movement that is trying to foster the idea of "Christian democracy" and that is fanned by the fanatical zeal of Jérome Servat, its "leader." Here again the autobiographical element of the novel is fairly transparent: the reference points to the short-lived *Sillon* movement which was founded in 1893 by Marc Sangnier, to bring about a solution of the crucial "social question," in line with "Christian-democratic" principles, but which died an untimely death after its condemnation by the Church (1910) because of its pronounced "liberalistic" tendencies.

Aside from such occasional references to historical events and constellations and frequent personal-introspective meditations of tortuous complexity, the plot of the novel is of almost lapidary simplicity. What there is of a "love-story" concerns the relationship of Jean-Paul, the sophisticated "amateur of souls," to Marthe Balzon, his cousin. Her love for Jean-Paul is an unquestioning self-giving which in its pristine purity makes it an unfailing medium of existential communication. Despite the physical frailty of the earthly vessel, this kind of love is capable of building bridges from soul to soul. It is a love as yet untainted by the gloom of the later Mauriac who, in referring to Pascal's relationship to his sister Jacqueline, could say: "In brotherly love, as in any other kind of love, the one wounds, and the other is wounded." In Mauriac's first novel, this ordinary and therefore all the more luminous love is capable of breaking the "chains"—forged by heredity, environment, education, and temperament—of Jean-Paul, the "young man" with his sad "pleasures" and his melancholy ecstasies.

—Kurt F. Reinhardt

Against The American Grain: Essays on the Effects of Mass Culture. By Dwight Macdonald. New York: Random House. 427 pp. $6.50.

DWIGHT MACDONALD is surely right to deprecate the "automatic friendliness" of many reviewers toward books which "deal with some big central issue," "take [themselves] very seriously," and "have the air of boldly stating some positive solution." Since that is the sort of book that he has produced himself, it will therefore be best to note at the outset that much of what he says about the cultural situation in America today is important and true, and then get on to the reasons why the book he says it in is unimportant and sometimes false.

It is a collection of articles and reviews in which he has been making certain points for some years now, and this fact causes some of the trouble. There is more here than a consistent point of view; there is a limited set of points made over and over. Judicious cutting might have made for the sustained development of an argument, but there has apparently been none at all. The same generalizations are often attached to the same illustrations, so that, since the book takes no notice of the repetitions, the reader can sometimes suspect that he has lost his place. Macdonald presumably believes that what he has to say is important, but he has not made his book say it concisely. Off hand, I would say that it is twice as long as it need have been.

This lack of rewriting may partly explain why the long first essay, which defines the general theme, isn't more effective. The first version of it was published in 1944, though another appeared in 1953 and there may have been further changes. Since those years there has been much discussion of its subject, and now, at least, it makes stale reading. Macdonald is at pains to describe "Midcult," a stratum which lies between "Masscult" (defined at length as Hollywood, television, popular fiction and so forth) and "High Culture" (no more clearly defined than usual, but involving thought and art which is truly serious and original). Midcult is really produced by formula, based on standards of popularity rather than of merit, and it really panders to its audience rather than challenging it, but it pretends to be High Culture, thus blurring standards and causing general confusion. I'm not sure whether in 1944 such a cultural geology could properly be offered as a thesis rather than an assumption, but announcing it today is like wondering if anyone has noticed that there's a lot of violence on television.

No reader, though, will be convinced that this familiarity is entirely the result of Macdonald's failure to revise. Throughout the book he displays what he calls "considerable tolerance for the obvious" when he discovers it in the "How-To" books:

> *We are an active, ingenious, pragmatic race, concerned with production rather than enjoyment, with practicality rather than contemplation, with efficiency rather than understanding, and with information rather than wisdom.*
>
> *Acceptance can be worse for a writer than rejection. There is, indeed, something alarming in the craving of contemporary Americans for reassuring, soothing messages.*
>
> *The consensus was that* [The Outsider] *is important because of what it says, apart from how it says it. I*

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think this is a false distinction.

And only a writer curiously insensitive to the old-hat could begin an article on Hemingway, in 1962, by adding four more weary pages to the anthology of Hemingway parodies.

Macdonald is at his best when attacking specific examples of overpraised Midcult works: *The Outsider*, *By Love Possessed*, and others. If his manners are sometimes bad, reviews today do doubtless suffer from being too mannerly. He scores off the *Great Books* nicely and says some sensible things about the new *Webster's* and the *Revised Standard Edition*. But he often weakens the effect of sound points by others that seem merely crotchety. The use of the *schwa* in the new dictionary is "catastrophic," apparently because Macdonald has trouble with it. In the *Great Books*, "devoting two volumes apiece to Aristotle and Aquinas could be justified only on their historical, not their contemporary, interest," but this is not the case with Plato. The translators of the *Revised Standard Edition* are "learned but unliterate," and Ezra Pound "might have made a much better job" of it.

It will be clear that the other great enemy is pedantry, or perhaps pedantry is part of Midcult because of the American worship of facts. (McCarthy's career "represented a melancholy Triumph of the Fact." The point is that the Senator claimed he had facts instead of relying on vague abuse, but one wonders if it would not have made a difference if his "facts" had more often been facts. This sort of silly quarter-truth appears too frequently, despite another Macdonald cliché: "half a truth is *not* better than no truth at all.") Macdonald is quite free of any idolatory of us academics and finds one remark "a foolish statement even for a professor of literature." I suspect he thinks that is humor, not just gratuitous spite.

Like many anti-pedants, he is inconsistent in his attitude toward facts. He isn't above including a lot of them about the history of translations of the Bible although they have nothing to do with his point. He appeals to them when he thinks he can use them: "The whole matter of the development of English is more complicated than it is thought to be by either the old-school grammarians or the Structural Linguists." (This startling remark is followed by a brief outline of what everyone knows who knows anything at all about the history of the language.) But on the whole he is superior to them and to the qualifications they might force upon him. In a discussion of Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* he originally confused two characters, one an angel, the other Satan. (This is corrected, after you have read the paragraph, by a footnote, but it does leave you wondering.) And a bit of the pedantic spirit would have restrained him from making superficial generalizations about the lives of writers: "I think it was this lack of private interests which caused [Hemingway] to kill himself when his professional career had lost its meaning."

It isn't Macdonald's fault that he hasn't a solution to Midcult and pedantry (which is, certainly, an increasing problem), but he shouldn't talk as if he had. The proper strategy against Midcult is an "attempt to define two cultures, one for the masses and the other for the [intellectual] classes." This is offered as a radical proposal, but it seems to have no practical consequences beyond greater rigor in reviewing. It also means that "the only public [the artist or thinker] should consider must be [*sic*] that of his peers," but since Macdonald sensibly suggests that most of the producers of Midcult are sincere in their work, this has a hollow ring.

These "peers" are not, of course, academic pedants but, ideally, such "amateurs" as Macdonald finds making up the center of British cultural life. The amateur, who is defined through an unusually dishonest distinction from the "professional" ("the difference between them is simply that the former does because he wants to what the latter does for pay"), is widely read and broadly interested. He enjoys a "freedom with off-the-cuff value judgments." He is like Alexander Pope, whose time Macdonald admires (Swift "lived in a more sensible age" than ours, as he would have been surprised to learn) and whom he pictures as a champion against pedantry to the right of him and Grub Street Masscult to the left of him—rather, one gathers, like certain contemporary essayists. Pope, however, was a great poet but a superficial thinker, while Macdonald is not a great poet. It is doubtful that there are enough amateurs whose off-the-cuff value judgments have interest to depend upon them as the center of a cultural revival. Macdonald himself, who "has no interest in religion," who feels that the physical sciences "aren't useful to me in a broader sense," and whose literary standards seem to be derived from T. S. Eliot at his most uncompromisingly classical (romanticism was "a new creed whose emphasis on subjective feeling as against traditional form was suitable to the democratization of taste that was taking place") does not seem to fit the role, in a broader sense.

It is really too easy to quote the book against itself. It repeatedly displays the qualities it most deplores: superficiality, solemnity about the obvious, rhetorical vagueness whenever the argument reaches a crux, verbosity, even a little pedantry. It is essentially Midcult, which is always likely to be telling itself that it is somehow "against the American grain" and feeding the reader's suspicion that he is, after all, a bit more culturally sensitive than his neighbor. Such products do a disservice because by dealing with real problems in what is essentially an unserious way, they can easily induce a reaction which tempts one to believe that the problems are not themselves very serious.

—Dean Frye

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Dublin in the Age of Yeats and Joyce. By Richard M. Kain. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 216 pp. $2.75.

"Rend the middle air." For an elegant small book that treats the Irish flowering as accurately as do some of the things you will have seen in three volumes folio. All the "indomitable Irishry" are here, Yeats, Joyce, Shaw, along with some that have proved domitable, Wilde, AE, Lady Gregory. A fine fund of anecdotage, with only very occasional dips into the fey.

The Familiar Faces. By David Garnett. New York. Harcourt, Brace, and World. 221 pp. $5.75.

If you have not yet done so, take your Bloomsbury shares and pitch them in the striate sea. David Garnett is a Bloomsbury. He writes sentences like "But misery me!", chats felinely of now-faded names of the 1920's, and sadly surveys the death-thinned ranks of friends. Some of the best pages are on T. E. Lawrence. Much of the book, however, is trivial, petulant, and thin.

The Letters of Wyndham Lewis. Edited by W. K. Rose. London: Methuen and Co. 580 pp. 63s.

The letters of the Master. In as handsome a volume as you will see this decade. More than 500 letters in all and spanning the whole career. The editorial apparatus and the commentary provided by Professor Rose are a delight to use. Lewis, who was always reticent about himself, managed to write two autobiographical books almost without mentioning his private life. In a very real sense his work was his life. These letters show the embattled Great Man struggling to get his work done, often in circumstances that might have discouraged Job. Beautifully illustrated, with the incomparable Lewis drawings.

Ultramarine. By Malcolm Lowry. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 203 pp. $4.95.

The first American edition of Lowry's novel of 1933. With an Introductory Note by Margerie Bonner Lowry. The new edition incorporates changes made by the author, who apparently kept tinkering with the book until his death in 1957. The novel is a partially autobiographical account of a 1927 voyage to the Far East on a tramp steamer. Lowry, his head full of Eugene O'Neill, had shipped out as a deck hand. The handling of the action is pretty ordinary seaman stuff. But the intelligence of the author of *Under The Volcano* is already there. And sometimes too the force and the ear.

The Shoes of the Fisherman. By Morris L. West. New York: William Morrow & Co. 374 pp. $4.95.

Morris L. West is a Catholic who also writes novels. He may have the faith, but there it ends. Several years ago he struck gold in his discovery of the Catholic theme —in a combination of dreary sex and facile salvation. Lately he has struck a new vein producing further riches: the Papacy. With perception fit only for the *Saturday Evening Post*, he tries to tell what is far beyond his poor powers to add or detract. His present epical nonsense will undoubtedly have a wide audience, since it requires so little effort and exploits the most trivial emotions. A shallow book: even shallower than a saucepan.

Letters From Vatican City. By Xavier Rynne. New York: Farrar, Straus and Company. 279 pp. $3.95.

The author of this fascinating study of Churchmen in action should be an object lesson for all those other and lesser chroniclers of things Vatican. With lucidity and refreshing candor, he lifts the veil that shrouds the work of the Church, giving the world, not an exposé, but rather insight into the Herculean efforts of men seeking to bring all men closer to God. This book should be required reading for aspiring journalists. Why a pseudonym? The answer is probably a sad commentary on Catholic journalism and on hierarchical apprehensions.

The Birthday King. By Gabriel Fielding. New York: William Morrow and Company. 383 pp. $5.95.

Buddenbrooks, up-dated to the Second World War. The story concerns a Jewish-Catholic steel family and their relations with the Nazi machine. Individual scenes are interesting and well-executed, but the book is not a lucid whole and is not a successful novel. Fielding has stolen wholesale from Mann but he overlooked Mann's intelligence. For summer hammock reading, to be thrown away afterwards.

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